



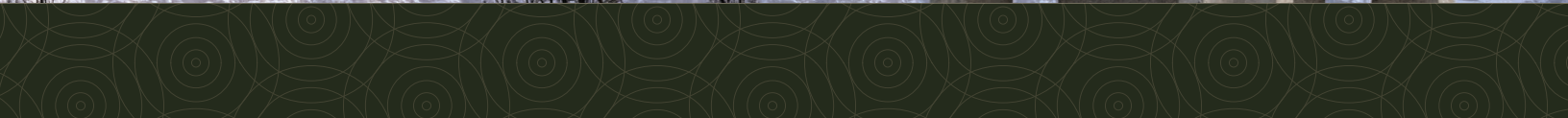
# ANNUAL REPORT

**BYU**  
Neal A. Maxwell  
Institute for  
Religious  
Scholarship

2022



# BYU Maxwell Institute





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The Maxwell Institute's  
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Not pictured: Timothy Farrant

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# Power and Influence

**J. SPENCER FLUHMAN**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE

I have some convictions about what we might call the “politics” of Latter-day Saint intellectual life. Others could approach this topic in terms of party politics or political philosophy, but I am concerned here with a more informal sense of politics—roughly, politics as power.

I start with comments from two peers in the Latter-day Saint academic world, one offered privately and another via social media. In the first case, a colleague once described himself to me as “apolitical.” I have wondered since about the sense that one can simply stand outside questions of power or governance or relation? I understand well “nonpartisan” inclinations but am less convinced that any of us truly can be apolitical. As

*I take it that Latter-day Saints are likely unique among Christians in using “priesthood” as a descriptor of what God does, not simply as a term for human activity.*

Kimberly Matheson has taught me in her marvelous work on the Book of Mormon, ignoring or masking power hardly puts it to godly use!<sup>1</sup>

In the second anecdote, a colleague insisted during a lively social media debate over women’s roles that the Church would do well with less priesthood. I have wondered if the comment unintentionally reveals a lingering Protestant sensibility, perhaps (with all due respect for my many Protestant friends!). More specifically, I take it

that Latter-day Saints are likely unique among Christians in using “priesthood” as a descriptor of what *God* does, not simply as a term for human activity. I doubt we have fully reckoned with the Restoration’s stunning redirection of the word. As a result, could I wish for less of God’s power in the Church? Less divine influence? No, I would not call for less priesthood. By understanding priesthood as divine activity and doggedly pulling it into the stuff of buildings and clothing and bread and healing, the Restoration craves holy power at every turn.





So, putting these two anecdotes together, I am suggesting that to pursue academic excellence as a disciple of Jesus Christ is to exercise priesthood-like power. Or, perhaps much more modestly—since I am not referring to ecclesiastical offices—I am claiming that the Restoration’s primary meditation on power has real claim on us as scholars. Joseph Smith’s inspired letter now appearing as Doctrine & Covenants 121 prompts me to wonder what it might look like to live an academic life “after the pattern of the priesthood.”<sup>2</sup>

The following comparison needs some work, no doubt, but it seems to me that the concluding verses of Doctrine & Covenants 121 are to power what secularism is to religion. That is, as many scholars have argued, “religion” is not the opposite of “secular.” Rather, in the modern West the secular functions to *sort* religions into what it considers to be the “good” and the “bad.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, for Latter-day Saints, holiness is not the opposite of power. Rather, the revelations offer a vision of holiness that sorts power into “good” and “bad” varieties. As we have it in the Prophet’s transcendent letter, bad power is coercive. It traffics in control and compulsion. It can at best only feign love.








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Things get interesting with *dominion*, however, since the word gets sorted into both categories! In verse 37, dominion is bad, linked as it is with compulsion. But, by the end of the section, dominion stands redeemed (v. 46). In fact, it figures as the very capstone of Christian life. The letter's royal imagery might clang on modern ears, perhaps, but it is significant that the trajectory of the Prophet's warnings on power culminate in a scepter, crown, and dominion. This *righteous* dominion is characterized by personal influence, which in turn flows from kindness, pure knowledge, and powers of persuasion. Ultimately, charity reigns as the defining element of the godly power we are to share in, however limited and feeble our attempts surely are.

(Never mind, for the moment, that "almost all men" evidently botch all of this [v. 39]. That sad fact surely explains most of human history!)

My point is that the life of the mind, if pursued as an act of worship, as Elder Maxwell memorably put it, ends up looking like priesthood, Restoration-style.<sup>4</sup> I recognize that this perspective on righteous power potentially pertains to all vocations or activities. We scholars have no special claim here, it is true, but these principles certainly have claim on us. That things can go terribly wrong with Latter-day Saint academic life or Latter-day Saint scholars themselves only underscores my point. We can exercise power in unholy ways. Again, I take it most men do. But we are called here to a different kind of influence and I, for one, have seen it. I am the beneficiary of it. Some of my academic and Church education mentors have changed my life. They have made all the difference for me. I have wanted to follow their noble examples not because I have to, but because I want to. They have persuaded me of better ways and better lives and better worlds. Without compulsory means, they have influenced me at my core, forever. What words describe that? Maybe these from this sublime 1839 revelation.


*My point is that the life of the mind, if pursued as an act of worship, as Elder Maxwell memorably put it, ends up looking like priesthood, Restoration-style.*

So, citizenship in God's kingdom means that the Latter-day Saint scholar pursues knowledge with holy fire pent up in her bones. Kindness weaves into teaching. We rightly wonder what gentleness might mean for scholarly methods. We worry over how hypocrisy might threaten our intentions or our institutions. We suffer long with colleagues and students and critics and publics. We keep practicing love until we don't have to fake it. We will not see mentoring as *part* of what we do, but the *reason* for what we do. If we practice all these ideals from that jail-penned revelation, we will wield real influence for good in the world. And that influence will radiate out, luminous and open-ended, across boundaries and time. It sounds too good to be true, perhaps, but I've seen it in the world. I am a witness. 

*A version of this essay was presented at the Faith and Knowledge Conference on January 29, 2021.*

## NOTES

1. See Kimberly [Matheson] Berkey, *Helaman: A Brief Theological Introduction* (Provo: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2020).
2. Joseph Smith, Jr., remarks to the Nauvoo Female Relief Society, in Sarah Granger Kimball, "Auto-biography," *Women's Exponent*, 1 September 1883, 51.
3. Peter Coviello is among those arguing for this perspective. See, for instance, his *Make Yourselves Gods: Mormons and the Unfinished Business of American Secularism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).
4. Elder Neal A. Maxwell, "The Disciple-Scholar," in *On Becoming a Disciple-Scholar*, ed. Henry B. Eyring (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 7.



*“The more you learn about the Savior,  
the easier it will be to trust in His mercy,  
His infinite love, and His strengthening,  
healing, and redeeming power. The  
Savior is never closer to you than when  
you are facing or climbing a mountain  
with faith.”*

—PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON,  
APRIL 2022 GENERAL CONFERENCE











# In Memoriam: Kate Holbrook

BY ROSALYNDE FRANSEN WELCH

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Kate Holbrook wrote what she loved and loved what she wrote. She grew up in a harmonious family headed by mother and grandmother. She loved the domestic arts and housework and female conversation that filled her home. So, she wrote about women. Kate famously loved food. She loved creating new recipes, preparing meals, throwing formal and informal dinner parties, and eating the best of fine cuisine or home cooking. So, she wrote about food. Kate loved the Church. She loved the community of Saints, she cherished the ritual and power of priesthood ordinances, she revered the hierarchy of church leadership, and she remembered our forefathers and foremothers. So, she wrote about it all.

Kate Holbrook was the essence of a disciple scholar, one who writes openly from the inside of a religious community, bringing the tools of an academic discipline to bear on different facets of the tradition as it is experienced from within. Kate earned a PhD from Boston University in Religious Studies and worked for many years in the Church History Department to increase understanding of Latter-day Saint women's history. As Elder Neal A.

Maxwell described the journeyings of the disciple scholar, Kate had her "citizenship in the kingdom, but carry[d] [her] passport into the professional world—not the other way around."<sup>1</sup> Before anything else, Kate was a disciple of Christ, a mother and sister in Zion, a daughter of God, and a shoulder to the wheel.

Kate's approach to study and faith made her a natural partner in the Maxwell Institute's mission to fortify the faith of Latter-day Saints through the work of religious scholarship. Kate was deeply involved in the Institute's publications and initiatives. Kate served on the Institute's Advisory Board and chaired its Imprint Board. She co-directed the Consultation on Latter-day Saint Women in Comparative Perspective and served as co-general editor of a forthcoming book series on the Doctrine & Covenants. Kate delivered the 2020 Neal A. Maxwell Lecture, entitled "The Weight of Legacy." With Melissa Inouye, she proposed and implemented the Living Faith Author Initiative for Women, and together they co-edited the Institute's forthcoming volume

*Before anything else, Kate was a disciple of Christ, a mother and sister in Zion, a daughter of God, and a shoulder to the wheel.*



*Because her academic work was motivated by love, she looked more deeply into the archives, wrote more carefully about the lives of the past, and thought more sensitively about justice and obligation in the historian's craft.*

sympathetic immersion in a community can bring to scholarly investigation. Because her academic work was motivated by love, she looked more deeply into the archives, wrote more carefully about the lives of the past, and thought more sensitively about justice and obligation in the historian's craft. In particular, Kate dedicated herself to recovering experience that other historians overlooked as trivial, conventional, or insignificant. She bore witness to the resourcefulness and complexity of the human actors whose ordinary lives make up the fabric of history.

Kate Holbrook's life and work immeasurably enriched the mission of the Institute and the intellectual life of Latter-day Saints. We cherish her memory and honor her legacy of faith and service. **MI**

*Every Needful Thing: Essays on the Life of the Mind and the Heart.* She also contributed a chapter, "Saving History: The Perquisites and Perils," to the collection *To Be Learned Is Good: Essays on Faith and Scholarship in Honor of Richard Lyman Bushman* (2016).

As Elder Maxwell promised, her historical scholarship was not limited by her front-and-center discipleship. Kate's body of work is a testament, indeed, to the value that deep and

#### NOTE

1. Neal A. Maxwell, "Some Thoughts on the Gospel and the Behavioral Sciences." *Ensign*, July 1976. <https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1976/07/some-thoughts-on-the-gospel-and-the-behavioral-sciences?lang=eng>







# 2022 Inside the Numbers



16

disciple-  
scholars



5

visiting  
scholars



1

retiring  
scholar



3

books  
published

1

journal  
published

50



student research  
assistants and  
staff

5



books written/  
cowritten/coedited  
by Institute scholars

356,258

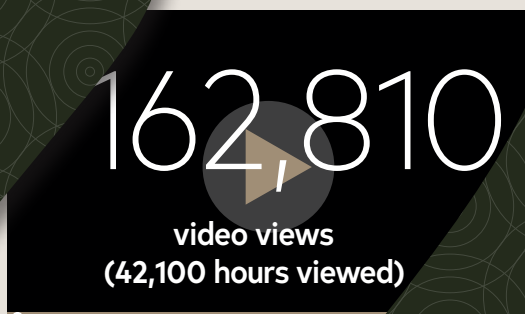
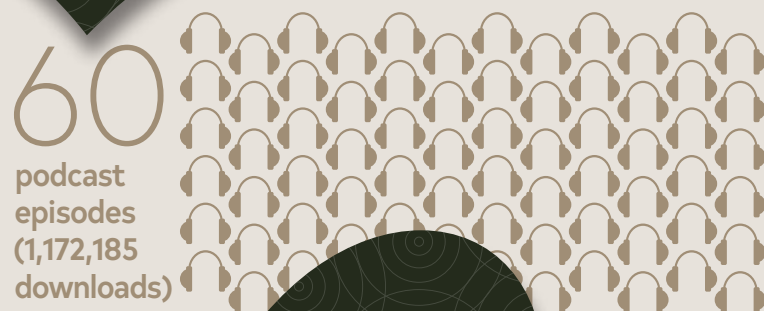
words published

12

journal articles/  
chapter contributions  
by Institute scholars







10 public events



2 experiential learning events

6 conferences and seminars sponsored



# Introducing the Book of Mormon Art Catalog: A Digital Database for Scholars and Saints

BY JENNIFER CHAMPOUX


The Book of Mormon Art Catalog provides unprecedented access to visual imagery inspired by the Book of Mormon. The catalog is a comprehensive, open-access, and searchable digital database of more than 2,000 images. It brings together for the first time Book of Mormon art from a range of public and private collections, museums, galleries, studios, exhibitions, and publications. The catalog supports research and education, promotes greater knowledge of artists worldwide, highlights the diversity of Latter-day Saint art and artists, and provides a study and devotional resource for members of the Church and other interested individuals.

*This catalog will illuminate the scriptures further and bring viewers closer to Christ.*

Each artwork entry includes the name of the artist, title, date, medium, dimensions, copyright information, and scripture reference. Several tabs below organize additional data such as Church media use, exhibition history, references in publications, and the artist's website and nationality.

This catalog will inspire new and varied artistic production, including scenes currently underrepresented in the art, to illuminate the scriptures further, and bring viewers closer to Christ. We see this as an ongoing, collaborative repository for Book of Mormon art.

There is a form on the website to suggest new artwork, additional information, or a correction. We hope you'll join us in exploring and building this enriching and beautiful catalog!

For more information on the Book of Mormon Art Catalog, please visit <https://bookofmormonartcatalog.org/> or message [bookofmormonart@gmail.com](mailto:bookofmormonart@gmail.com). 





*The Dream* by Kathleen Peterson. © By Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



## 2022 MAXWELL LECTURE:

# Introduction of Dr. Adam S. Miller

BY ROSALYNDE FRANDSEN WELCH

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE

*This introduction was offered prior to the 2022 Maxwell Lecture by Dr. Adam S. Miller, the transcript of which begins on page 20.*

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In 1953, the philosopher Isaiah Berlin published a famous essay entitled “The Hedgehog and the Fox.”<sup>1</sup> He based it on a line of Greek poetry which claims that “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.” Berlin uses these categories to characterize writers and thinkers: hedgehogs, whose motivating spirit and body of work elaborate a single vision or principle—among these he names Dante and Dostoevsky; and foxes, those thinkers who pursue many ends, move on many levels, and celebrate the vast variety of experiences and objects—among these he names Shakespeare and James Joyce.

The twist comes when he characterizes Tolstoy, who, he claims, was by nature a fox, but believed in being a hedgehog. The tension between Tolstoy’s wide-ranging fox-like method, and his hedgehog-like admiration for the absolute, is what gives his thought its compelling power.

We’re not here to discuss Russian literature, more’s the pity. But Berlin’s categories illuminate my friend Adam Miller’s work. If Tolstoy was a fox who believed in being a hedgehog, then Adam is a hedgehog who believes in being a fox. A child of the Restoration, he has produced a body of work that might be framed as a potent marriage between the Book of Mormon’s theology of grace and the Doctrine & Covenants’ theology of God’s immanence. His fundamental insight is already worked out in his first book.<sup>2</sup> He argues that grace, if it is to be coherent and operative in a Latter-day Saint theology, must be “onshored”: that is, infused into the deepest workings of creation, not offshored to a transcendent realm that occasionally breaks into ours. He developed an ontological account of how this happens, and from there, his every theological exploration—of salvation, messianism, materialism, eschatology—is a working out of this picture of homegrown grace. Tonight, for instance, he will lecture on the necessity of God. Traditionally, the necessity of God is rooted in God’s metaphysical transcendence. But tonight, you will hear an account of the necessity of God that is rooted in the here and now, in the ordinary experience of life and the workings of this world that God has loved so well. Adam is a hedgehog.

But he’s a hedgehog who believes in being a fox. Because this fundamental insight about grace, if it is true, opens out onto a world that is various, plural, time-bound, and constantly recreated in Christ. And as Berlin said of Tolstoy, it may be this interplay between the hedgehog and fox in Adam’s work that produces its originality and power.





In working out his singular vision over the course of twelve books, Adam has consistently invited others into his orbit. A professor of philosophy for many years at Collin College in McKinney, Texas, Adam has been a tireless builder of collaborative projects and inquiries. Together with Jim Faulconer, Joe Spencer, and a few others, he has developed the field of Latter-day Saint performative theology rooted in close reading of scripture. His collaboration with Joe in building the Latter-day Saint Theology Seminar has proved to be a spectacularly successful model for refining and exporting this mode of theology. He is a generous mentor and friend, always on the hunt for potential colleagues with whom to collaborate and learn. I am the immensely lucky recipient of his mentorship and friendship, and it would be impossible to overstate his influence on my work and my spiritual life. All who know him well know of his extraordinary warmth and kindness, his searing intelligence animated by a persisting love and wonder in the world.

#### NOTES

1. Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
2. Adam S. Miller, *Badiou, Marion and St Paul: Immanent Grace* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2008).





# "The Necessity of God: In the Flesh, Present Tense, Imperative Mood"

**ADAM S. MILLER**  
COLLIN COLLEGE

*2022 Neal A. Maxwell Lecture—12 November 2022*

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## I.

I can't stop thinking about this man who couldn't stop walking. I keep rereading his story. Sometimes I dream about him.

One day, he's fine. He does what he pleases. He sits. He eats. He works. He sleeps.

And the next day, he starts walking and can't stop. Robbed of any control, he just keeps walking and walking like an automaton, for decades, for the whole rest of his life, away from everything he wants and everyone he loves, until he dies.

One day he has everything. Then he starts walking. And the next day he doesn't.

And I can't help thinking that this is a story about you—or me, that it's a story about me.

And, especially, I can't help thinking that this is actually a story about God. That it's a story about what it means to meet God "in the flesh," in my own flesh, here and now, in the form of implacable necessities, and to suddenly find, as Jesus put it, that somehow God is already "in" me and that somehow Jesus's great intercessory prayer has already come true and the decisive day has already arrived, "that day" when, as Jesus promised, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).

In other words, I can't help thinking that this story is actually about what scholars call "divine indwelling."

It's a story about what it means to have Christ *in* me as he, in turn, is in the Father.



---

## II.

In Joshua Ferris's novel, *The Unnamed*, Tim Farnsworth finds himself indwelt by a will that is not his own.

Tim is a husband and father. He loves his wife, Jane, and his daughter, Becka. He's handsome and healthy and has a great head of hair. His teeth are strong and white. He's smart and works hard. He's honest and generous. And to top it off, he's made a lot of money as a valued partner in a Manhattan law firm.

Tim is a model of twenty-first century happiness and success.

Until one day, Tim walks out of his corner office, past the firm's front desk, down fifty flights of stairs, through the busy lobby, and out onto the street—and then, unable to stop, just keeps walking, with only a handful of remissions, for the rest of his life.

Tim is no longer in control. He's been occupied by a foreign power. He's host to an uninvited guest. Tim's mind says stop but Tim's body keeps going.

When Tim "looked down at his legs," Ferris writes, "it was like watching footage of legs walking from the point of view of the walker. That was the helplessness . . . the terror: the brakes [were] gone, the steering wheel [was] locked" and Tim was at "the mercy of this wayward machine."<sup>1</sup>

Tim and his family try everything. They visit every doctor. They gather every second opinion. They try every New-Age, crackpot remedy. But none of it helps.

Tim is diagnosed with "benign idiopathic perambulation." But this, really, is just a made-up name for the nameless thing, driven by unknown causes, that his doctors don't understand.

Tim tries running instead of walking, but this just exhausts him and, despite his exhaustion, his legs keep going. He has his wife lock him in the bedroom but, trapped inside, he walks himself "dizzy and half-mad." He tries a treadmill. He'll "beat his body at its own game," he thinks, "outwit dumb matter with his mind." But, every time, he just steps right "off the revolving belt, into freedom."<sup>2</sup>

Nothing works.

"His body wouldn't be contained or corralled," Ferris writes. His body "had, it seemed to him, a mind of its own."<sup>3</sup>

*I can't help thinking that this story is actually about what scholars call "divine indwelling." It's a story about what it means to have Christ in me as he, in turn, is in the Father.*

## III.

Tim's body had, Ferris says, "a mind of its own." In this respect, Tim's situation is dramatic but ordinary. At root, this is commonplace. You already know what this feels like. You already know what it feels like when your body has a will of its own and won't do what you want.

Your knee has gone out. Your hands are arthritic. You've had cancer. You've had back surgery. You can't have children. You suffer migraines. Your teeth ache. Your heart is weak. You can't sleep at night. You're allergic to nuts. You can't sit on these chairs. Your skin burns easily. Your hair is thinning. Your vision is blurry. Your metabolism is low, and your blood sugar is high. You know what this is like.

Or, even when you're well, your body has a mind of its own. Even when you're well, your heart beats, your blood pumps, your lungs breathe, your food digests, your nerves hum, your thoughts turn, and your emotions rise and fall without consulting you.

The same is true with all your senses: your eyes see and your ears hear and your nose smells and your tongue tastes and your whole body feels (pleasure or pain, it doesn't matter) with a will all its own—naturally, automatically, irresistibly, necessarily—without your willing any of these things to be seen or heard or felt.

What could be more ordinary than a body with a mind of its own?

And, surely, what could have less to do with that very special, otherworldly thing that philosophers and theologians have long called "divine indwelling"?

---

For instance, in Jean-Yves Lacoste's monumental *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, the entry on divine indwelling certainly never suggests any connection between "circumincession"—a technical, theological term for divine indwelling—and poor Tim Farnsworth's "idiopathic perambulation."

Sure, Tim can't stop walking, but what does his affliction have to do with God or divine indwelling?

The encyclopedia entry, far from mentioning the troublesome autonomy of our bodies, focuses entirely on three classical ideas about the nature of God, claiming that: (1) the term "expresses the dwelling of the Trinity in one another," (2) the term describes "the interpenetration of divine and human natures in the person of Christ Jesus," and (3) the term names the means, and ultimate end, of human redemption.<sup>4</sup>

As the Father indwells the Son (by divine nature), so the Son indwells the flesh (as incarnated), and so, ultimately, the Son comes to indwell us (redemptively).

Much of this classical language about divine indwelling is, of course, borrowed directly from the Gospel of John. Matthew, Mark, and Luke don't talk this way, but John frames nearly everything in terms of Jesus's efforts to put God "in" us.

For example, in John 6 Jesus teaches, "he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56).

Or, in John 15 Jesus says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Or, most memorably, in John 17 Jesus prays for his followers to "all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:21, 23).

Here, all of John's talk about divine indwelling is clearly canonical, it's obviously and deeply formative for the whole Christian tradition—and, also, it's rarely used by Latter-day Saints.

Why?

Because, as the encyclopedia indicates, for the larger Christian tradition, "indwelling" has become synonymous with a Trinitarian understanding of the Godhead. And Latter-day Saints don't think about God

*As the Father indwells the Son (by divine nature), so the Son indwells the flesh (as incarnated), and so, ultimately, the Son comes to indwell us (redemptively).*

in Trinitarian terms. We don't describe the Godhead's mutual indwelling as a "consubstantial" unity and, what's more, we certainly don't define consubstantiality as essentially immaterial. Rather, for Latter-day Saints, as section 131 puts it, "there is no such thing as immaterial matter" because "all spirit is matter" and, eventually, we're all going to "see that it is all matter" (D&C 131:7-8).

On top of this, section 130 gives the following explicit warning: "the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false," because the Father and Son both have "a body of flesh and bone as tangible as man's" and, thus, it must be the Holy Ghost who as "a personage of Spirit . . . dwell[s] in us" (D&C 130:3, 22).

And so, refusing the tradition's Trinitarian interpretation of divine indwelling, Latter-day Saints have understandably shied away from talk of divine indwelling altogether.

But what if we didn't? And if we didn't, what might a native, Latter-day Saint account of divine indwelling look like?

What if Latter-day Saints held tight to Jesus's own emphatically repeated claim that divine indwelling is real and redemptive and then—breaking with Trinitarian thinking—paired divine indwelling with the Restoration's claim that God has a body of flesh and bone?

If all spirit is matter, what if divine indwelling is material?

Or, if even God has a body, what if divine indwelling is about bodies?





#### IV.

Thinking this way would recast Christianity. It would commit us to living in a new world—premortal, mortal, postmortal, it doesn't matter—a world that consists exclusively of bodies and matter, whether coarse or subtle. And, too, thinking this way might recast how we think about salvation.

If all spirit is matter—if spirit is not immaterial—then we can't just default to using traditional Christian ideas about an immaterial salvation. Salvation can't simply be figured as an escape from the problematic demands of matter. It can't be figured as a way of evading or outwitting or conquering the competing wills and implacable necessities obliged by our troublesome bodies.<sup>5</sup>

But thinking this way isn't easy. And if you have a body, you probably already know something about how difficult it is to think about the world (and spirit, and God) exclusively in terms of bodies and matter.

As a rule, people don't like it. As a rule, we actively resist it.

When confronted with the kinds of willful bodies and material necessities that undercut our fantasies of unchecked agency and sovereign independence, our first impulse—our natural impulse—isn't to acknowledge their reality and bravely commit to living selflessly in this new world.



Rather, our first impulse is to do some version of what Tim Farnsworth first does: evade and deny.

After Tim's first bout of "idiopathic perambulation," he enjoys a period of remission. He resumes a normal life. He has dinner with his wife and daughter again. He sleeps in his own bed. He goes back to his corner office and sits quietly for hours at a time as he prepares effective and high-priced legal strategies.

With some hard work and willful forgetting, Tim pieces back together a passable version of the primal fantasy that frames the life of every natural man: the fantasy that his will is the only will that really matters—or, even, exists. And the fantasy that his own body, heart of his own heart, certainly has no real will of its own.

And so long as Tim squints just so and frames his life from just the right foreshortened angle and doesn't look too hard, the illusion seems to hold well enough.

Until, of course, it doesn't. And Tim starts walking again. And can't stop.

Once he starts walking again, Tim can't bear to tell his wife. And even after he's forced to tell her, he wants to pretend the next day like nothing has happened. He wants to pretend like his body is immaterial, like his legs didn't just send him on a forced march through lower Manhattan and half of New Jersey until he blacked out from exhaustion.

Even after he tells her, even as he rests for a moment in the caesura between one walk and the next, Tim insists on going back to work like normal. The illusion must be maintained.

"Janey, I'm all rested up. I have to go in."

The night before, she had pushed aside how they would deal with the long-term things like his work, in order to make him safe for that one night. Now she had to deal with the reality of the light of day, and she should not have been surprised that he would want to go in.

"You should take the day off," she said.

"No, that would just be . . ."

"We need to—"

". . . capitulation."



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“—to deal with this, Tim. Capitulation? It’s called reality.”<sup>6</sup>

But Tim doesn’t respond. He isn’t interested in reality. He sits mute and inert in the passenger seat of their luxury car, head in hands, until they finally pull into the spacious garage of their beautiful home and the car comes to a stop.

But Tim can’t stop.

Tim feels, Ferris says, like a “frightened soul inside [a] runaway train of mindless matter, peering out from the conductor’s car in horror.”<sup>7</sup>

It’s too much to bear. Tim snaps and loses control and starts

pounding the glove box with his gloved fist. He rained blow after blow down on the glove box and she let out an involuntary cry and jerked back against the cold window. He stopped hitting the glove box and began to kick it until the latch snapped and the door fell. He continued to kick as if to drive his foot clear through to the engine block. One of the door’s lower hinges snapped, and thereafter the glove box had the cockeyed lean of a tired sun visor. It would never be fixed.

When it was over, he withdrew his foot and out spilled a handful of napkins. His heel had compacted the owner’s manual and ripped the maintenance records and insurance papers. He returned his feet to the mat and things were calm again, but he would not look at her.

“I have to go in,” he said finally.

Her gaze had a fire’s intensity.

“Okay,” she said. “You should go in.”<sup>8</sup>

## V.

In this respect, Tim is like the rest of us—even the best of us.

Confronted by the fact that we are indwelt by alien wills, by wills that unfold relentlessly in line with their own driving necessities, who hasn’t destroyed a glovebox, kicking until the latch breaks and the door goes cockeyed, kicking with enough force to drive their foot clean through to the engine block? Who, having failed in their efforts to evade and deny, hasn’t raged against matter? Who hasn’t cursed bodies?

Again, this is an ordinary thing. But what’s to be done about it? If we are all matter—and if matter is all there is—how should we think about this kind of material indwelling? How should we think about matter’s willful autonomy, about material bodies composed entirely of other bodies?

For me, the pivotal question is this: if all spirit is matter, what would it mean for matter to be saved rather than escaped? What would it mean to redeem—rather than evade and deny—matter?

My thesis is as follows: it would look, I think, like section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Indwelling, I’m suggesting, is performed vicariously.

Section 128 is, to be blunt, unusual. Familiar as Latter-day Saints are with the work of performing vicarious baptisms for the dead, it’s easy to overlook how effortlessly and efficiently section 128 takes two thousand years of Christian thinking and turns it upside down. When it comes to uncoupling Restoration Christianity from Trinitarian thinking, section 128 is, in my view, at least as important as sections 130 and 131.

It’s essential, of course, that section 130 teaches that all spirit is matter. But section 128 offers something more. It offers a model for *redeeming* matter. And, I would argue, it also offers a model for matter *qua* matter—i.e., a robust but intuitive metaphysical model for materiality as such.<sup>9</sup>

*If all spirit is matter, what would it mean for matter to be saved rather than escaped? What would it mean to redeem—rather than evade and deny—matter?*

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Section 128 consists of instructions given in September 1842 by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois. These instructions clarify, both in theory and in practice, the work of “vicarious baptism for the remission of sins” (D&C 138:33). The section opens with instructions for performing proxy baptisms and then transitions into a series of surprising explanations for this practice, explanations that the revelation itself describes as “a very bold doctrine” (D&C 128:9).

I want to extract just three key aspects of this bold doctrine.

First, the Prophet urges Latter-day Saints to keep careful records of vicarious baptisms because, he says, these records will function as “the book of life” out of which the dead will be judged. The dead will be “judged out of those things which were written in the books,” he says, and these books, he clarifies, “refer to the records which are kept *on the earth*” (D&C 128:7, emphasis mine).

This is the first crucial twist in the story. In section 128, our earthly, material records aren’t marginal addenda to ideal and immaterial heavenly originals. Rather, section 128’s bold doctrine is that the records used in heaven on Judgment Day will be the earthly records.

Second, a similar inversion takes place with the traditional baptismal symbols of death, burial, and resurrection. It’s not the case, as one would expect, that vicarious baptisms for the dead are patterned after rituals originally designed for the living. Rather, the Prophet explains, baptisms for the living symbolize death, burial, and resurrection because this ritual is itself modeled on the need for vicarious work for the dead. Baptisms

for the living were, he says, “instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in the likeness of the dead” (D&C 128:12).

This is the second crucial twist. In section 128, the vicarious form of baptism is described as original, and the non-proxy form is derivative.

Third, section 128 then recasts this vicarious logic of redemption as a form of genealogy. For the living, vicarious work for the dead is not an additional obligation required beyond securing their own salvation. Instead, the Prophet says, vicarious work is the key to one’s own salvation. “Their salvation is necessary and essential to our

*This is the pattern at the heart of redemption: to save matter is to act as a proxy on its behalf. Here, vicarious work for the dead isn’t just a model for redeeming the dead—or even a model for participating in our own redemption. As Jesus demonstrates, vicarious work is a model for redemptive work of any kind.*

salvation. . . . they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (D&C 128:15). As a result, we’re told, vicarious baptisms serve as a crucial “welding link” that, by proxy, works to reassemble the genealogy of the whole human family “from the days of Adam even to the present time” (D&C 128:18).

This is the third crucial twist. Our lives are so deeply intertwined with other lives that they can’t be saved in isolation. Our lives cannot be saved without their lives, nor can their bodies be saved without our bodies. Here, salvation doesn’t require our liberation from the trouble and difficulty of the other lives that indwell us; rather, it requires being welded—through willing, vicarious work on their behalf—to all those other lives.

In summary, then, these are the three key ideas—all of which are anathema to traditional Trinitarian thinking—that I want to borrow from section 128: (1) the heavenly and the material are not different in kind, (2) vicarious relationships are original rather than derivative (or, to frame this second point as a definition of matter itself: to be material is to be composed, vicariously, of other bodies with wills of their own), and (3) redemption is—essentially, not accidentally—a genealogical reckoning carried out by means of explicitly vicarious work.

A very bold doctrine, indeed.



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Come back, now, to my original question. If all spirit is matter, what would it mean to save matter rather than escape it? What would it mean to redeem—rather than evade and deny—the bodies and lives that indwell us?

And here, now, is my full thesis: to save matter rather than escape it, we must learn how to live as vicarious agents who compassionately serve the wills and necessities that indwell us.

This is the pattern at the heart of redemption: to save matter is to act as a proxy on its behalf. Here, vicarious work for the dead isn't just a model for redeeming the dead—or even a model for participating in our own redemption. As Jesus demonstrates, vicarious work is a model for redemptive work of any kind.

## VI.

Meanwhile, of course, Tim Farnsworth is still walking.

Day or night, scorching heat or wicked cold, it doesn't matter. He can't stop walking. In the summer, his skin cooks and peels. In the winter, frostbite claims fingers and toes. One frozen day, he removes his boot and sock to find a black pinky toe still inside, loose in the wool like a shriveled raisin.

Day after day, Tim walks until he blacks out. And then, exhausted and unconscious, he's left exposed and vulnerable.

Tim survives his second bout of idiopathic perambulation only by strapping himself into a medical bed in one of his house's many empty bedrooms. His arms and legs still pull against the restraints—dependably, rhythmically, automatically, as if he were upright and walking—but at least he's inside. At least he's sheltered from the sun and the wind. At least he can eat and drink. At least his wife and daughter know where he is.

But months of being restrained like this almost drive him crazy. And if his second bout of walking hadn't ended as abruptly and arbitrarily as it had started, he might have lost his mind.

Now, for a moment at least, he can rest. As the tidal pull of material necessity ebbs, he can sit. He can stand. He can stay.

But this second remission isn't a clean recovery. The costs of this last bout aren't nominal. The losses he's suffered aren't temporary. Tim's been voted out of his partnership at the law firm. He's not the handsome, healthy man he once was. His face is scarred. His hair is thinning. His limp is permanent. He's literally lost parts of himself. He struggles to reconnect with his wife and daughter. He doesn't know what to do with his days. His mind lacks poise and balance. He's afraid.

But, little by little, Tim starts to gather some of the pieces. His daughter goes off to college. He and Jane sell their house and their cars and their furniture and move into a small apartment in the city. He finds some legal work for modest wages. Tim and Jane survive by paring their lives to the quick, by sacrificing in advance all the things they know they cannot keep, by priming their hearts and minds for consecration.

This calm holds for a few fragile but priceless years.

Until, one day, it doesn't. And the eye of the storm passes. And instead of coming home for dinner after work, Tim finds himself walking again.

This time, Tim will keep walking for the rest of his life. He'll keep walking until the day he dies. He'll never have another remission. He'll never stop walking again.

But this time, instead of evading or denying his body's will to walk, Tim finds himself surrendering outright. He can't pretend again. He won't. He knows that, whatever happens next, he can't strap himself back into that bed. He can't go back to those endless days and those four blank walls. He can't deny necessity.

So, Tim makes a decision.

On that first new walk, before his phone's battery dies, he calls his wife to tell her what's happened. He tells her he loves her. He calls her, as always, "banana." He asks her not to worry. He says he'll call when he can.

But, unlike before, Tim doesn't try to tell her where he is or guess where he may be going. He doesn't ask her to come find him or rescue him or bring him home. He doesn't pretend he's going back to the office tomorrow. He doesn't kick in the glovebox.

# GOD CONS NESS





A photograph of a large audience seated in a lecture hall, viewed from behind. They are facing a large projection screen that displays the word "CIOUS" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. The screen is set against a light blue background. To the right of the screen is a vertical wooden panel. The audience members' heads and shoulders are visible in the foreground, mostly in profile or from behind. The lighting is soft, coming from above the screen.

# CIOUS

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Instead, as his legs carry him across the bridge and out of the city and away from everything he wants, Tim just leans into the wind and walks, a hole in his chest where his heart used to be, an emptiness in his head where his ambitions used to be, lost to necessity.

## VII.

Tim Farnsworth has passed over into the bardo.

Having crossed the river and left the city behind, he's entered that no man's land, that decisive space between two lives, that sacred—but trying and uncertain—place where he can no longer pretend that his will, alone, matters.

In this space, Tim is brought face to face with the hard kernel of truth at the center of every life: the truth that all spirit is matter, that his body is indwelt by other bodies, that his will depends on other wills, that his life is composed of other lives. The credits have rolled on his carefully blocked fantasy of autonomy and control, and he's been ushered out of the theater. Back on the street, he's surprised to find the sun has already set and his soul's dark night has already fallen.

There's nothing to do now but walk.

And so, Tim walks. And he walks. One foot in front of the other. One necessity after another.

But in this space, all is not lost. Captured by the necessities that indwell him, Tim may now find God. He may find himself indwelt, vicariously, by God. He may discover what the Protestant theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher called—using a term of art I dearly love—“God-consciousness.”

Schleiermacher's two-volume magnum opus, *Christian Faith*, was published in Germany in 1830—an auspicious year. In it, he aims to retrofit the whole of Christian dogma for use in a world that is increasingly modern rather than medieval, increasingly scientific rather than superstitious, and increasingly oriented toward material bodies rather than the dream of immaterial spirit.

Whatever his other weaknesses, Schleiermacher's genius is this: rather than appealing to tradition or history or dogma, Schleiermacher boldly grounds his defense of Christianity in the immediacy of God.

Like Paul, Schleiermacher claims that God is “not far from every one of us: for *in* him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:27–28, emphasis mine). For Schleiermacher, to be alive, to walk about—to exist, even—is to already be “in” God. God isn't absent or distant. God isn't dead or asleep. God isn't locked in the deep past or reserved for an elect few in the far future. God is here and now, in this room. I am in God. You are in God. And in some crucial sense, as Jesus insisted, God is already in us.

We are indwelt.

The Christian disciple's defining work, as Schleiermacher sees it, is to become conscious of this indwelling, to become conscious of God.

Schleiermacher defines God-consciousness as “neither a knowing nor a doing but a distinct formation of feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness.”<sup>10</sup> But—and this is the key—this kind of immediate “self” consciousness isn't lonely or solipsistic or hermetically self-identical. The self isn't independent or isolated. The self isn't an island. Exactly the opposite: rather than being autonomous, every self is vicarious. Every self is composed of other selves. Every self consists of other bodies and other wills.

Every life is made of other lives.

Which is to say that, like Tim Farnsworth, every self consists, in part, of implacable and unchosen necessities.

In this way, self-consciousness, as God-consciousness, opens immediately onto an awareness of our dependence on necessities we cannot control. As Schleiermacher puts it: God-consciousness only arises when we become “conscious of ourselves as absolutely dependent or, which intends the same meaning, as being in relation with God.”<sup>11</sup> Here, Schleiermacher echoes King Benjamin: to become conscious of divine indwelling is to become conscious of my moment-to-moment dependence on God (cf. Mosiah 2:20–21).



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Or, in this same vein, Schleiermacher also defines God-consciousness as an intuition of the “infinite.” By the infinite, Schleiermacher means that vast, open-ended network of existential roots and branches, of selves, bodies, lives, wills, causes, and forces that intersect in us and, then, shape who we are and what service we’re called to render.

To be conscious of God “in” me is to be conscious of myself as just one vicarious node in that vast genealogical web of shared and divided forces.

To be conscious of God in me is to see myself from God’s perspective, from the perspective of eternity—*sub specie aeternitatis*—as someone who cannot save themselves, as someone who cannot be saved alone, and as someone who cannot be saved without welding links of vicarious work that bind them to the endlessly blooming genealogy of bodies and lives to which they belong.

Or, to close this loop with a Restoration twist, God-consciousness names an intuitive grasp of the three “very bold doctrines” previously distilled from section 128: that the heavenly and the material are not different in kind, that life is inherently vicarious, and that redemption is the work of reckoning with the proliferating lines of genealogical force that intersect in us.

### VIII.

But what does this mean for Tim Farnsworth? What does God-consciousness mean for a man who can’t stop walking?

*To be God-conscious is to love.*

It means, first of all, that surrendering to necessity is not enough. It’s not enough for Tim to give up. It’s not enough for Tim to resign himself and abandon his efforts to deny the wills that indwell him. To become conscious of God, Tim must not only feel in his bones—acutely, intuitively—his dependence on these necessities, he must also actively *affirm* them. He must come to love them. He must learn to work, in God’s name, on behalf of the good that opens from them.

This, again, is redemption: Tim must learn to live vicariously, as a consecrated steward, on behalf of the wills that indwell him—even if these wills present as his enemies. “I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” (Matthew 5:44).

To be God-conscious is to love.

And while God is not the stubborn necessity that indwells Tim, God is decisively manifest in the necessity of loving this necessity that indwells Tim. God intervenes in the necessity of loving this stranger—this strange indwelling will—as if it were God himself.

“Lord . . . when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? . . . And the King shall answer and say unto them . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:38, 40).

This is the vicarious principle at the heart of life and redemption: inasmuch as you’ve done it unto one of the least of these, you’ve done it unto me.

Not only must we love those indwelling strangers, we must also love them vicariously on God’s behalf. And by loving them on God’s behalf, we succeed in vicariously loving God.

This, too, is circumincession. This is the tightly braided round of indwelling described in Jesus’ great intercessory prayer. Working vicariously in God’s name as his agent, I work vicariously on behalf of those strangers that indwell me, and thus vicariously love God through vicariously loving them.

Them in me. I in them. And, thus, God in us.

Here, every “in” marks a vicarious relationship, every vicarious relationship marks an occasion for love, and every vicarious expression of love marks the vicariously indwelling presence of God.

This is the onset of redemption. And this, then, is what Tim slowly learns to do.

Tim keeps walking. He’s always still walking. But he stays in sporadic contact with his daughter as he wanders westward. He reaches out when he can find a phone or send an email. He drops a postcard as he’s able.

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But mostly he just walks. And over time, he not only stops denying the stubborn will that indwells him, he learns to work with that will. He learns to work on its behalf.

Tim learns to stay ready. He learns to keep his boots on his feet and his hat on his head and his backpack at hand. He keeps his water bottle full and his bag stocked with protein bars. He pieces together a wardrobe out of interleaved layers that he can take on or off in sync with the weather.

And, through these efforts, Tim also learns how to prop open a door inside himself.

He learns how to stretch out that gray block of quiescent time between the end of a walk and the moment exhaustion claims him. And in that gray space—stretched a little farther each day—Tim gives himself room. He gives himself room to love and affirm. He gives himself room to turn and look down the length of the road he's just traveled, to wipe his brow or wash his face in a cold stream, to fill a water bottle or mail a postcard, to choose a spot and pitch a tent and hunker down for the night.

Tim walks for years and years. His learning curve is rough and gradual. Progress is slow. As a rule, he tries not to think about Jane. He tries to keep his eyes on the road. Thinking about Jane is too hard. It's too painful.

*God isn't absent or distant. God isn't dead or asleep. God isn't locked in the deep past or reserved for an elect few in the far future. God is here and now, in this room. I am in God. You are in God. And in some crucial sense, as Jesus insisted, God is already in us. We are indwelt.*

She's too beautiful. Tim wants Jane to have a life of her own, untethered from his wandering. He wants to set her free. He wants her to live again and to love again.

So Tim walks and walks, alone. He wanders, aimless, from the East Coast to the West. Until one day a new necessity intervenes. And his daughter confesses, despite her mother's strict instructions, that Jane has cancer, that her treatments have failed, and that she's dying. Hearing this, all Tim's resolutions crumble to dust. Every promise he's ever made himself to leave her alone and set her free is immediately annulled.

Tim decides that distance doesn't matter. The fact that Jane is in a hospital on the opposite coast doesn't matter. Only necessity matters.

But the difference now is that necessity has itself undergone a qualitative change: Tim has willingly *doubled* the number of necessities in play. He's added to the necessity of his walking the necessity of seeing Jane.

He's added to blind necessity the necessity of love.

So, Tim determines to will something new with that gray block of time that remains after a walk. Tim decides that, when the day's compulsory walk ends and matter's grip loosens, he'll point himself back in Jane's direction and keep walking, now of his own free will, until his feet can no longer carry him.

This plan is mad. A continent separates him from Jane. But Tim starts walking that same day. He walks for months and months, through fire and flood, through rain and sun. He walks through spring and summer and fall. He walks in circles. He walks three steps forward and two steps back. He walks two steps forward and three steps back. His route across the country traces a dizzy, spiraling pattern of aimless deviations and resolute redirections that only haltingly add up to miles crossed in the right direction.

But this just is what it is. Things just are what they are. So be it. Tim doesn't evade or deny. He doesn't rage against matter. He doesn't put his foot through the glove box. Necessity must be honored. And, anyway, Tim isn't walking for and on behalf of Tim. Rather, Tim is walking vicariously. He's walking, by turns, for and on behalf of the strange will that indwells him and, now, for and on behalf of Jane.

And by walking this way—by walking vicariously—Tim's love for these indwelling wills has begun to bleed into a consciousness of God.

Still, Tim is afraid he'll be too late. He's afraid he's taking too long. He's afraid Jane won't recognize him. Or, worse, that he won't recognize Jane. And if he ever arrives at her hospital room, Tim is afraid he won't know





what to say, that he won't have any words, and that he'll be stranded without a way to cross that last small gap between them.

But Tim keeps going. He keeps walking. By the time Tim arrives on the East Coast, he's nearly ground himself to powder.

He finds the hospital. Limping, he shuffles across the threshold of the hospital's sliding glass doors. He leans against the wall of the elevator as it ascends. He counts room numbers out loud to make sure he's walking in the right direction.

But then, Ferris tells us, when Tim finally cleared the door to Jane's room and he "saw her in the hospital bed, swimming in that awful blue gown," reduced to skin and bone by the cancer,

he knew at once what it had all been for, why he had started off and why he had struggled, and it wasn't to win . . . and it wasn't stubbornness or pride or courage. He went to her and she looked at him standing over her. All time and distance between them collapsed, and without any mental searching for the word, he said to her, "Hello, banana," and then reached out to take her hand.<sup>12</sup>

Tim held Jane's hand, and Jane his, for a long time. She waited for Tim to speak. Tim pulled up a chair. He made space for more words to come. When he finally started talking again, Tim tried to explain "where he had been and how he come to be there."

"I thought the worst," she said.

"That I would be alive and look like this?"

The film of tears that glazed over her dark and hollowed eyes quivered as she smiled. She squeezed his few fingers, no less bony and fragile than her own. "I think you look devastating," she said.

"Devastated?"

"As handsome as you ever were."

"Now there is a tender lie," he said.<sup>13</sup>





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## IX.

In Part Five of his *Ethics*, Baruch Spinoza introduces a blueprint for what Schleiermacher, a hundred and fifty years later, will call “God-consciousness.”

There, Spinoza describes a state of blessedness that follows when we discover that we already live and move and have our being in God. And, pointedly, Spinoza’s description of blessedness involves the same basic elements we’ve already identified: blessedness requires a keen awareness of our dependence on God. Or blessedness requires a keen awareness of ourselves as just one small node in an infinite genealogy of causes and effects, of actions and consequences, of parents and children, of life and death.

But true knowledge of these genealogies, Spinoza argues, can be discovered in two distinct ways.<sup>14</sup>

You can, of course, reason your way back through the decision tree of causes that resulted in your being what you are and the world being what it is. You can reconstruct lines of family history, back through a body’s material branches to its causal roots.

And this kind of cognitive reasoning can facilitate blessedness. It can prime God-consciousness. It can help. But the weakness of this approach is that it remains finite. It can add up the numbers, but those numbers will never add up to infinity.

However, there is, Spinoza suggests, a second way to acquire true knowledge of causes, an approach that works not through reason but through the gestalt of a global intuition. It’s possible, Spinoza claims, to have an immediate intuition of the infinite in the form of a feeling or affect.<sup>15</sup>

While you can’t think your way into God-consciousness, you can learn to intuit God.

You can learn to feel God in you.

What does an immediate intuition of the infinite feel like? What does it feel like to become conscious of yourself as a node in an infinite genealogy? To become conscious of God in you?

It feels, Spinoza says, like necessity.

God feels like necessity.

God-consciousness sees all things in light of God, under the aspect of necessity—*sub specie necessitatis*.

*You can learn to feel God in you.*

This necessity is not, of course, a dumb fatalism. (Determinism and predestination are incompatible with materialism.)<sup>16</sup> It is, rather, the redoubled necessity that follows when we work vicariously to redeem blind necessities by adding to them the necessity of love. And this redoubled necessity is—ironically—the lifeblood of true agency. It supplants the immaterial fantasy of “free” agency with the material reality of a *moral* agency. Free agency is the fantasy that follows from denying our dependence on God, the reality of consequences, and the inherently vicarious nature of our bodies and lives. Moral agency, in contrast, willingly affirms the necessity of our dependence on God, the reality of consequences, and the gospel’s governing imperative to always act as loving proxies on behalf of the wills that intersect in us. At the end of the day, the only way to have real agency is to act in God’s name, in line with his will, as his vicarious agent.

To have agency, we must be God’s agents.

But this kind of vicarious love is impossible without an intuition of necessity because to love someone is to affirm the joint necessity of both who they now are and what they now need.

When you wake up in the morning, this is your work, this is your prayer, this is the substance of a Christian life: to dig out from under all the noise and nonsense and wishful thinking and vain ambitions the load-bearing cornerstones of necessity that will uphold the truth of that day.

As a Christian, your aim is to be as conscious of God as possible by hewing as closely to necessity as you’re able, both in terms of your acceptance of what cannot now be changed and in terms of your willingness to do now what must be done.

This is your prayer: what, Lord, is necessary? What cannot be changed? What must now be given?

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You must answer such questions again and again. What wills indwell you? What necessities compel you? What vicarious work claims you? What enemies must you, today, love?

As sinners, we continually ask: what if?

As Christians, we continually pray: what must be?

When God answers this prayer—when you become God-conscious—you’ll know it. You’ll know you’ve found God’s will because it will arrive with the force of an imperative.

God always feels like an imperative.

And that imperative, in its necessity, will always give two inseparable commands: you must continually forgive all things the necessity of what they now are, and you must continually give all things whatever good they now necessitate.

## X.

Tim Farnsworth can’t stay in that chair next to Jane’s hospital bed—he must walk—but he circles back every day.

When Jane, confined to that bed, asks him what he sees when he leaves, Tim finds he can hardly answer. He hardly knows. His gaze, over so many years and so many miles, has turned decisively inward. He hardly notices what is right in front of him.

*You’ll know you’ve found God’s will  
because it will arrive with the force of  
an imperative. God always feels like an  
imperative.*

An old woman? he offers lamely. A pair of boots? A chain-link fence?

“In all that time?” Jane asks.<sup>17</sup>

So Tim takes up a new kind of vicarious work: he tries to see the world for and on behalf of Jane.

For the first time he began to pay attention to the things he saw on his walks, so that when he returned to her, he had observations of the outside world to share. They were fleeting,

they were middles without beginnings or ends, but they were diverting—for him to witness, for her to hear. She soaked them up. They seemed just as much nourishment as whatever the doctors were providing.

He realized he might have been doing it wrong for years. He might have seen interesting things had he been able to let go of the frustration and despair. He wondered what kind of life he might have had if he had paid attention from the beginning. But that would have been hard. That would have been for himself. It was easier now, doing it for someone else.<sup>18</sup>

Soon, Jane dies.

And Tim is walking again. His eyes are open now and necessity is still redoubled but without the strain now of getting back to Jane, without the strain of adding a second walk to the walk he cannot avoid.

Ferris tells us that Tim Farnsworth “maintained a sound mind until the end. . . . He took care of himself as best he could, eating well whenever possible, sleeping when his body required it.” What’s more, now “he was paying attention, as Jane had taught him, and had learned to distinguish a hundred variations of unnamed winds” and a hundred anonymous bird songs that he knew by heart.<sup>19</sup>

He carried on like this until one winter night, safe in his tent,

he relaxed into the warmth of the [sleeping] bag and felt his body, still humming with the jangle of his recent walk, wind down into a stillness that eventually made its way into his deepest interiors. The wind was just starting to pick up, but beneath its bellowing he became aware of his heart whispering *listen . . . listen . . . listen . . .* He heard the blood pump out of his chest and flow down his arteries to





pulse faintly at his wrist and in the hollow beside his anklebone, and his breathing lifted him up and down, up and down, and he heard the calmness, like the coals of a settled fire, of his rested bones.<sup>20</sup>

In the morning, Tim Farnsworth woke again but, instead of rising,

he chose to do as he had done the night before: settle deep inside himself and listen to the strange, subtle operations going on inside his body. He listened for his heart to whisper its soft word. He listened for the breathing that lifted him up and down inside his bag. . . . [But] he detected nothing but an enormous, gentle stillness from the things he could name and those he couldn't inside him, the organs and muscles, the cells and tissues. He never had to rise again, the silence informed him . . . and in a measure of time that may have been the smallest natural unit known to man, or that may have been and may still remain all of eternity, he realized that he was still thinking, his mind was still afire.<sup>21</sup>

## XI.

This is the test: can you love necessity? Can you forgive it, care for it, bless it?

Friedrich Nietzsche called his version of this test “the eternal return.”<sup>22</sup> Imagine, Nietzsche says, that your life—composed as it is of material troubles, indwelling wills, and unchosen necessities—imagine that your life were to repeat, again and again, for all of eternity.

(Not just some of it, but *all* of it. Your knee has gone out. Your hands are arthritic. You’ve had cancer. You’ve had back surgery. You can’t have children. You suffer migraines. Your teeth ache. Your heart is weak. You can’t sleep at night. You’re allergic to nuts. You can’t sit on these chairs. Your skin burns easily. Your hair is thinning. Your vision is blurry. Your metabolism is low and your blood sugar is high.)

Could you still love your life? Could you will, joyfully, its repetition? Could you add to life's blind necessities the necessity of loving them? Could you shelter these strangers and love these enemies? Could you, as their proxy, weld yourself to them, baptize yourself for them, and live your life for and on behalf of them?

Could you, by caring for them, become conscious of God?

This is the strait gate, the narrow path, that leads to eternal life: if you had to keep walking for eternity—if there were no such thing as immaterial matter—could you learn to love walking? **MI**

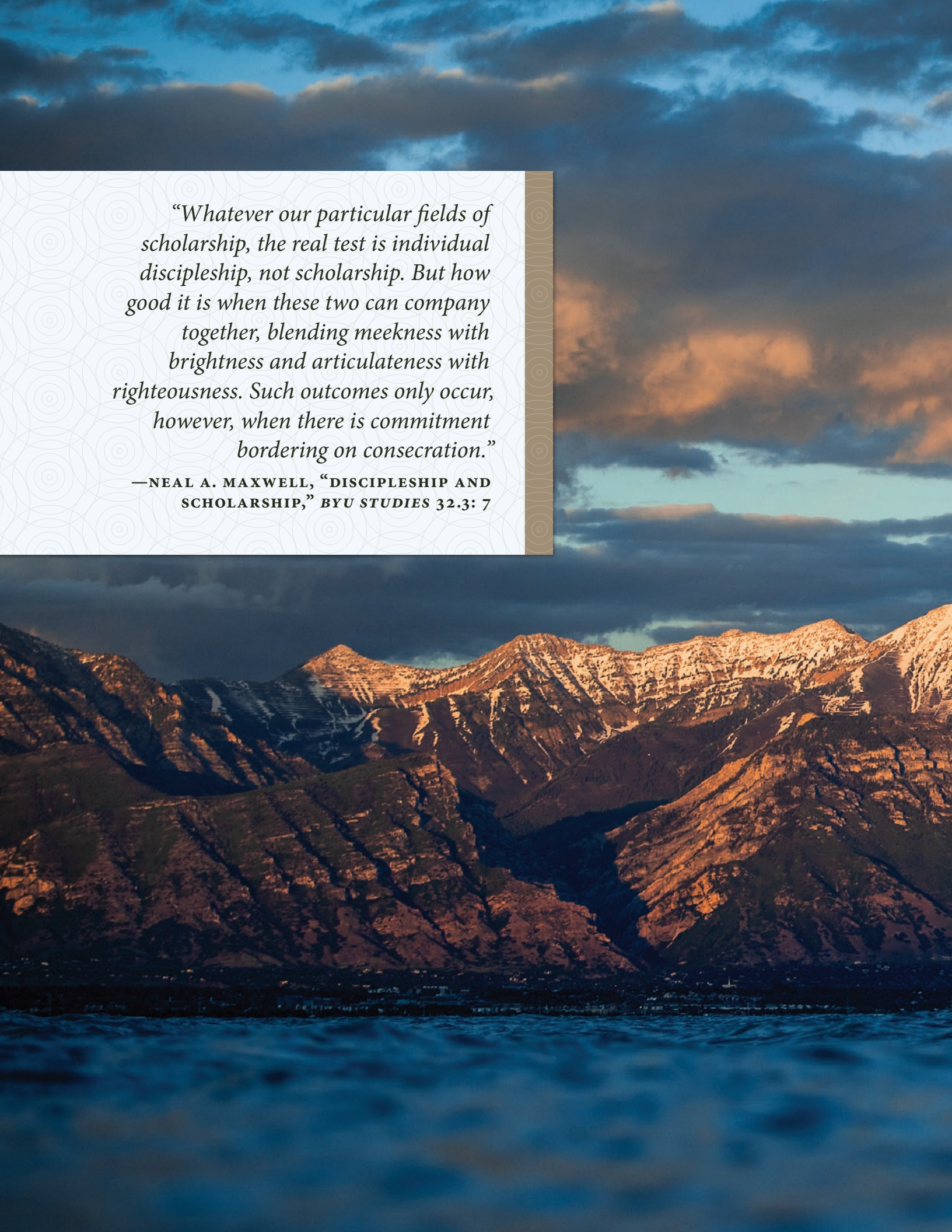
## NOTES

1. Joshua Ferris, *The Unnamed* (New York: Little, Brown, 2010), 33.
2. *Ibid.*, 44.
3. *Ibid.*, 44.
4. See Jacques Fantino, "Circumincision," in Jean-Yves Lacoste, ed. *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005 [French 1998–99]), 315–16.
5. I have taken a strong position here with respect to how tightly intertwined traditional Christian beliefs are with various species of metaphysical idealism and, thus, the extent to which they may require a fundamental restructuring to be compatible with a metaphysical materialism. For a contrasting opinion on the possible compatibility of traditional Christian metaphysics with matter (and one that also engages with Latter-day Saint beliefs), see Stephen H. Webb, *Jesus Christ, Eternal God: Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012). For my own review of Webb's book, see Adam S. Miller, "Stephen H. Webb, *Jesus Christ, Eternal God: Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter*," *Mormon Studies Review*, 1 (2014): 182–187.
6. Ferris, *The Unnamed*, 14.
7. *Ibid.*, 24.
8. *Ibid.*, 15–16.
9. To say that something is material is not to say that it must simply be, in the ordinary sense, a "physical" object. This kind of naïve physicalism is, I would argue, just a disguised form of metaphysical idealism. For my part, I take something like Plato's classical definition of matter as a crucial starting point: matter is defined by the fact that it is composite. All material things are composed of a plurality of parts and, in turn, all material things are also parts that help compose a plurality of other material things. Further, the composite nature of material things dovetails with their other defining trait: the fact that matter, as created or composed, is subject to time. Matter is in motion. Matter has potential. Matter is energetic. Matter is subject to change. This approach to matter aligns, then, with the possibility of defining materiality itself in terms of composite bodies vicariously composed of other composite bodies. All this in contrast to the classical definition of what's immaterial as simple (rather than composite), as a self-contained whole (rather than a distributed and complex part), and as fixed or unchanging (rather than mobile and energetic). For more on this point, especially in relation to Latter-day Saint theology, see Adam S. Miller, "A Radical Mormon Materialism: Reading *Wrestling the Angel*," *Element: A Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology* 7, no. 1 (spring 2018).
10. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 2 vols., trans. Terrence N. Tice, Catherine L. Kelsey, and Edwina Lawler (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 1:8.
11. *Ibid.*, 1:18.
12. Ferris, *The Unnamed*, 283.
13. *Ibid.*, 285.
14. See especially Proposition 40 in Part 2 of Spinoza's *Ethics*.
15. While Spinoza clearly claims both that it is possible to grasp the infinite by way of an intuitive knowledge and that we must affirmatively grasp the necessity of our emotions to redeem them, the move to explicitly interpret this intuition as an affect that takes the felt form of necessity is an interpretive gesture that combines his claims about necessity in Propositions 6 and 14–16 from Part 5 with Propositions 25–30 from Part 5.
16. Allow me to add a brief note here about my reading of this intuited "necessity," a reading that amends Spinoza's version of determinism in relation to the metaphysical claim that "all is matter." Given that reality is material and vicarious all the way down—and, thus, irreparably open and dynamic and plural rather than closed and static and self-identical—we shouldn't say that necessity means "things *could* not have been otherwise." Rather, we should say that necessity means "things *are* not otherwise." Here, we still get the affective weight of a *felt* necessity, but this necessity is always retroactive in character. Things cannot have been otherwise—now. But the future is not closed. And apart from the constraints imposed by matter as such, the specific shape of our present necessities is never predetermined or predestined in advance.
17. Ferris, *The Unnamed*, 287.
18. *Ibid.*, 287–288.
19. *Ibid.*, 306.
20. *Ibid.*, 309, ellipses original.
21. *Ibid.*, 310.
22. Nietzsche introduces this thought experiment in Aphorism #341 in *The Gay Science*. For an especially productive interpretation of this idea, see Gilles Deleuze's account of "eternal return" as an ethical test rather than a deterministic cosmology in Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia UP, 1983), 68–72.









*“Whatever our particular fields of scholarship, the real test is individual discipleship, not scholarship. But how good it is when these two can company together, blending meekness with brightness and articulateness with righteousness. Such outcomes only occur, however, when there is commitment bordering on consecration.”*

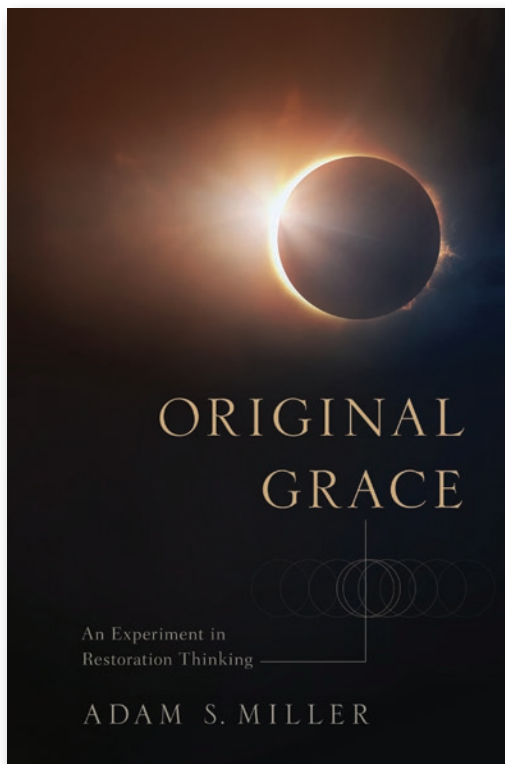
—NEAL A. MAXWELL, “DISCIPLESHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP,” *BYU STUDIES* 32.3: 7





# Publications

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**ORIGINAL GRACE:**

**AN EXPERIMENT IN RESTORATION THINKING**

Adam S. Miller

(June 2022)

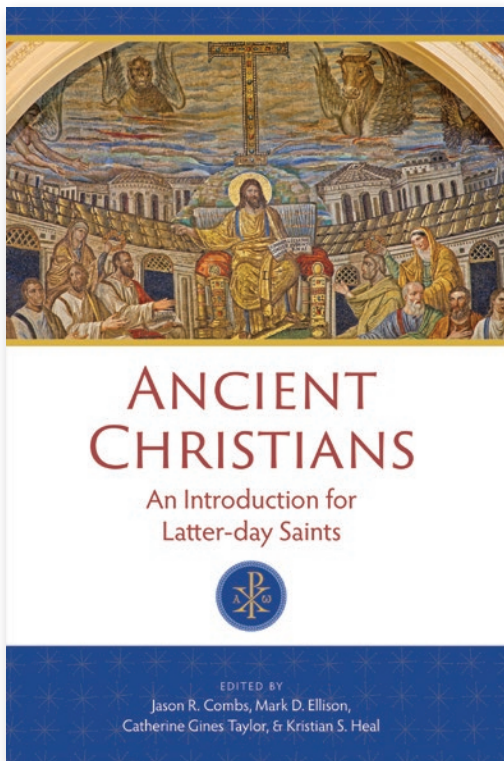
Co-published with Deseret Book Company

“Hallelujah! Adam Miller turns original sin, law, and justice on their heads and provides us with a new grasp on grace and divine love. He weaves together stories of his father with theological explanations of a true, living Savior and of the beautiful partnership I so desperately need with Him. This book speaks to me in a very personal way and I am finally able to place myself, with new eyes and a new heart, to a grand understanding of God’s love for me. I see the plan of salvation and the role of Christ on a higher level.”

—Jenny Reeder

Author of *First: The Life and Faith of Emma Smith*





**ANCIENT CHRISTIANS:  
AN INTRODUCTION FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS**

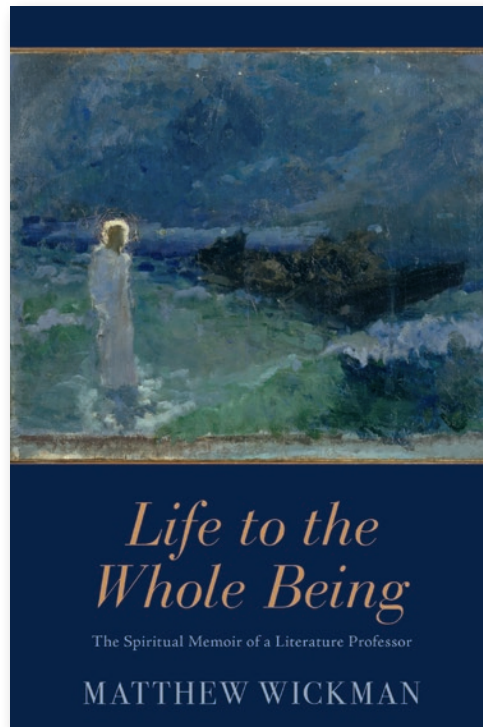
*Editors:* Jason R. Combs, Mark D. Ellison,  
Catherine Gines Taylor, Kristian S. Heal

*Contributors:* Jason R. Combs, Kristian S. Heal,  
Thomas A. Wayment, Ariel Bybee Laughton,  
Matthew J. Grey, Mark D. Ellison, Gaye  
Strathearn, Cecilia M. Peek, Daniel Becerra,  
Catherine Gines Taylor, D. Jill Kirby, Nicholas J.  
Frederick, Miranda Wilcox  
(November 2022)

“This book, though having an intended readership within the Latter-day Saint community, is to be welcomed much more broadly as an introduction to early Christian history that is at once attentive, thematic, and detailed. It is humble yet scholarly, and it shows why this subject really matters to people of faith. . . . I’m so grateful for this project and this lively, respectful conversation between Latter-day and late-Antique Saints.”

—Rev. Dr. Andrew Teal  
Chaplain, Fellow, and Lecturer,  
University of Oxford

**LIVING FAITH SERIES**



**LIFE TO THE WHOLE BEING: THE SPIRITUAL  
MEMOIR OF A LITERATURE PROFESSOR**

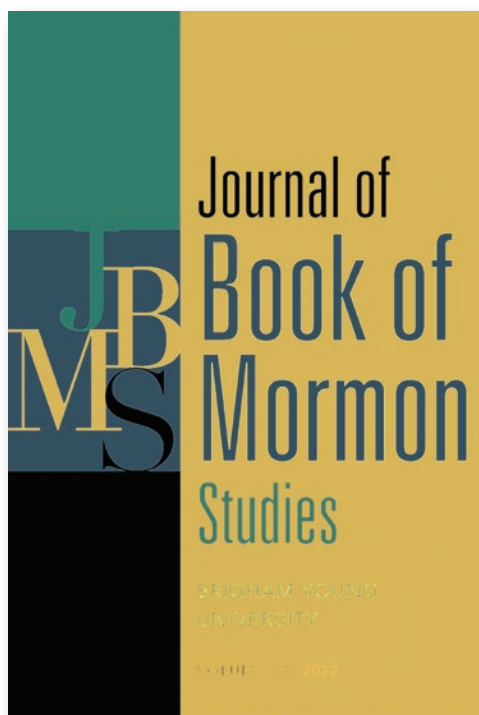
Matthew Wickman  
(March 2022)

“*Life to the Whole Being* is a heroically authentic book, what Wickman calls ‘real speak’ about existential angst and spiritual searching in intellectual life. Entirely winsome, uncoercive, and compelling, *Life to the Whole Being* conveys an astonishingly vivid sense of God’s vast endlessness and approachable meekness, what Wickman describes as the gentle contrariness of the Spirit who refuses to let us rest in our narrow ideas and shallow understandings. I’ll be recommending this to students and colleagues for years to come.”

—Lori Branch  
Associate Professor of English,  
University of Iowa

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## PERIODICAL



### JOURNAL OF BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES

#### VOLUME 31 (2022)

*Editor-in-chief* Joseph M. Spencer, *Brigham Young University*

*Contributors:* Robin Scott Jensen, Joseph M. Spencer, Patrick Q. Mason, Kimberly Matheson, Rosalynde Frandsen Welch, John Christopher Thomas, Nicholas J. Frederick, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Kristian S. Heal, Sharon J. Harris, Benjamin Keogh, Jordan T. Watkins, Christian Swenson, Kylie Nielson Turley

## FROM OUR SCHOLARS

Philip L. Barlow. Foreword to *Open Canon: Scriptures of the Latter-day Saint Tradition*, edited by Christine Blythe, Christopher Blythe, and Jay Burton. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2023.

Philip L. Barlow and Stephen Betts. "The Place of the Bible and Biblical Scholarship among Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Latter-day Saints." In *The Bible and the Latter-day Saint Tradition*, edited by Taylor G. Petrey, Cory Crawford, and Eric Eliason. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2023.

Terryl Givens. *Let's Talk About Faith and Intellect*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2022.

Terryl Givens and Nathaniel Givens. *Into the Headwinds: Why Faith Has Always Been Hard and Still Is*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2022.

Kristian Heal. *Genesis 37 and 39 in the Early Syriac Tradition*. Monographs of the Peshitta Institute 20. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2022.

Kristian Heal. *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on Aaron the Priest*. Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 71. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2022.



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Kristian Heal. Edited with Jason R. Combs, Mark D. Ellison, and Catherine Gines Taylor. *Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints*. Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2022.

Kristian Heal. “Preaching Christ: Scripture, Sermons, and Practical Exegesis.” In *Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints*, edited by Jason R. Combs, Mark D. Ellison, Catherine Gines Taylor, and Kristian S. Heal, 25–61. Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2022.

Kristian Heal. With Carl W. Griffin. “Early Christian Biblical Interpretation.” In *The Bible and the Latter-day Saint Tradition*, edited by Taylor G. Petrey, Cory Crawford, and Eric Eliason, 297–309. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2022.

Kristian Heal. Review of Nicholas J. Frederick, *The Bible, Mormon Scripture, and the Rhetoric of Allusivity*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016. *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 32 (2022): 210–18.

Jennifer Lane. “Hostility toward Jesus: Prelude to the Passion.” In *Learn of Me: History and Teachings of the New Testament*, edited by John Hilton III and Nicholas J. Fredrick, 147–60. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2022.


Kimberly Matheson. “Emboldened and Embarrassed: The Tenor of Contemporary Book of Mormon Studies and the Role of Grant Hardy.” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 31 (2022): 75–99.

Grace Soelberg. “BYU Slavery Project.” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (Spring 2022): 73–76.

Catherine Gines Taylor. Edited with Jason B. Combs, Mark D. Ellison, and Kristian S. Heal. *Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints*. Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2022.

Catherine Gines Taylor. “Inclining Christian Hearts: Work for the Dead.” In *Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints*, edited by Jason R. Combs, Mark D. Ellison, Catherine Gines Taylor, and Kristian S. Heal, 395–431. Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2022.

Rosalynde Frandsen Welch. “The Secular Syllabus and the Sacred Book: Literary Scholars Approach the Book of Mormon.” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 28 (2022): 100–121.

Rosalynde Frandsen Welch. Afterword to *Every Needful Thing: Essays on the Life of the Mind and the Heart*, eds. Melissa Inouye and Kate Holbrook. Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2023. 





# 2022 Institute Scholars

*“For a disciple of Jesus Christ, academic scholarship is a form of worship.”*

—Elder Neal A. Maxwell

## PHILIP BARLOW

### NEAL A. MAXWELL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

I continue to be inspired and animated by the purpose of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute and its distinctive relation to the mission of BYU and the wider Church of Jesus Christ. As of July 1, 2022, I stepped down as Associate Director of the Institute, after nearly four years of service in that capacity. During that time, as well as in the year and a half prior to that when I was a visiting scholar from Utah State University, I have witnessed the most inspiring things: especially hearts, spirits, and minds consistently enlarged and nourished, even transformed, by the caliber of faithful scholarship produced by my associates at the Maxwell, a scholarship that probes and helps illuminate the depths of the gospel while relating this to both the Saints and the outside world in diverse ways. In addition to these readily visible products, I invite anyone who cares enough to read this Annual Report to pay careful attention to the individual accounts of our many student research assistants. Their reports each year provide a striking portal to the nourishing spiritual and mental work engendered by their partnership with their disciple-scholar mentors.

I am replaced by the gifted Dr. Rosalynde Frandsen Welch, who now assists the also-gifted Spencer Fluhman in leading the Institute. This affords me less encumbered time to pursue several writing projects. In October I sent off to press the manuscript of a fresh collection of essays on belief among Latter-day Saint scholars: *A Thoughtful Faith for the 21st Century*. At year's end, I am nearing completion of a volume on the concept and experience of “time” in modern scripture, which is an entry in a forthcoming series, *The Doctrine & Covenants: brief theological introductions*. Earlier in the year, I contributed a chapter to a collection, designed for scholars, relating to all modern studies of the Restoration: an analysis of the shifting—and fading—dominance of history in Latter-day Saint intellectual life and the very recent rise of a critical mass of professional-grade theological reflection on our doctrines. Amidst all this, I bade nostalgic farewell to student research assistant Alexander Christensen, who is off to graduate studies at Oxford. I am surprised that such talent can somehow be succeeded, but my ongoing awe and gratitude to BYU students Janai Wright and McKay Hammarstrom, with whom I work at present. They have no proper right to be so smart and skilled already at their age. But then grace has always been amazing.



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## JEFFREY CANNON

### RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

With a full year at the Maxwell Institute under my belt, I remain in awe of the special place that it is.

As I continue work on the Book of Mormon's role in Africa, the book's reception and its effects around the world provide fascinating areas of research. One of these areas is the concept of Zion and the culture of the Restoration. I am currently revising an article that has been accepted for publication on early twentieth-century missionary photography in South Africa, which examines how mostly American missionaries viewed the Church and their African mission field. It considers questions of global and local cultures within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Invitations to submit papers for two conferences in 2022 focused my attention on two other events in the global history of the Church. The Global Mormon Studies conference held in Coventry, England, provided an opportunity to discuss the events of June 18, 1922, when a group of university students in Edinburgh, Scotland, burst into the local branch's weekly sacrament meeting. Upon entering, the young men informed the elders presiding at the meeting that it was "our pleasant duty to tar and feather you." They proceeded to perform their appointed task, though they lacked any actual tar, substituting green paint and a mixture of other substances instead. My research situates this incident within a period of increased antagonism directed at Latter-day Saints in the UK and particularly in the contemporary Scottish context, in which Scottish Presbyterians were engaged in a nationalist campaign against those they saw as foreign in race and religion.

At the biannual Church History Symposium sponsored by the Church History Department in Salt Lake and BYU's Department of Church History and Doctrine, I presented a paper on the challenges to religious freedom faced by the Church in apartheid-era South Africa. Like the paper on the "tarring" and feathering in Edinburgh, this paper highlighted some of the issues for the Church when it is faced with unfavorable political and social realities in local contexts as it expands throughout the world. Both these presentations have been expanded and submitted for publication.

As I consider the opportunities and challenges presenting the expanding Church, I have been blessed by the opportunity to teach the Survey of World Religions and the Foundations of the Restoration courses. My students have challenged me to reconsider topics such as revelation, salvation, and sin in varied local contexts and across generations. BYU President Kevin J. Worthen recently challenged the faculty to consider the formation of students to be our primary product, and I am happy to play a part in the work of the Maxwell Institute in working with students in many different endeavors.





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## MORGAN DAVIS

### RESEARCH FELLOW

It's been a year of quiet productivity for me. No travel; only one local conference presentation. Just a steady routine of coming in to the Institute each day to work on the Living Faith series and, most of all, to write.

The Living Faith series, which I am fortunate to co-edit with Miranda Wilcox (BYU, English), produced two titles this year: The first, *Life to the Whole Being* by Matthew Wickman, is the fruit of Matt's many years of reflection on his own spiritual development and the ways that his training in and love of literature and other disciplines have helped him navigate the perplexities, joys, and sorrows of his life. The other book is *Every Needful Thing: Essays on the Life of the Mind and of the Heart*, edited by Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye and Kate Holbrook, and co-published with Deseret Book (to appear February 2023). A first of its kind for the Living Faith series, this book gathers the wisdom and expertise of more than twenty diverse Latter-day Saints who have made significant contributions in fields such as law, mathematics, medicine, education, the social sciences, and biology, all while living lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. Their thoughts about discerning God's guidance in their lives, managing competing claims on their time, and navigating difficult ethical and political issues offer life-proven wisdom for younger Latter-day Saints to learn from.

As to my own work, for the past several years I have been formulating and writing various segments of a book-length exploration of the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon. This year that project became my primary focus. In the fall, I located a publisher and finished a full draft of the manuscript which is now under review as I continue to refine it for publication.

In October, I gave a preview of one of the chapters from the book to the Book of Mormon Studies Association conference held at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. I spoke about the way that the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon both make references to events recounted in the Exodus story of Moses and the Israelites leaving Egypt. It is fascinating to note that both scriptures include details that differ from the familiar Exodus version, changes that show how the tradition lives on in new contexts.

My work has also been greatly blessed by a cadre of wonderful student research assistants who contributed their own ideas to my writing on the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon as we met each week to discuss readings that we had done related to the project. It was a joy to see their minds working on a question and to experience the synergy of thinking together about texts that we love and revere. They will each get a mention in the acknowledgments to the book!

The Maxwell Institute is an ideal place for developing a book manuscript. Our offices are quiet and gathered close around our specialized library and convenient to the larger BYU campus library with its myriad services. But even better is the collegial environment. Everyone here contributes to the spirit of the place, which is both cheerful and earnest. We have opportunities to share work, share meals, pray together, and simply befriend each other. These moments provide inspiration and human connection in what can otherwise be a very solitary business of research and writing. I love my colleagues at the Maxwell Institute.



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## TIMOTHY FARRANT

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

I arrived at the Maxwell Institute at the beginning of September after having defended my doctoral thesis on medieval theology at the University of Oxford in August. Our family left the Jerusalem of William Blake in search for another in the Rocky Mountains of Utah. The task of “settling in” is one not to be underestimated, but so far I have found refuge amongst like-minded scholars who, too, value truth, curiosity, scholarship, and good humour.

My first months at the Institute marked both the beginning and the end of a few projects. I completed the finishing touches on a chapter for a forthcoming edited volume produced by the International Association for Anselm Studies, based on a paper I delivered at the University of Durham. Moving forward, I very much hope to continue my association with these world-leading academics on all things Anselm.

In terms of medieval theology, I have recently been invited to contribute to two other volumes connected to the life and works of the thirteenth-century Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste. Specifically, my work here poses questions about how one approaches figurative texts produced in the High Middle Ages, which has far-reaching implications for how meaning can be discovered in religious writings by the modern reader. The collaboration involved is both enlightening and enriching, and it reflects my aims to engage across constructed boundaries in the future, whether disciplinary or otherwise.

Whilst finishing my doctoral thesis, I worked in chaplaincy in UK hospitals and prisons. Working in these settings provided the opportunity to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Chaplaincy with chaplains of various religious and spiritual hues, and of all beliefs and none. My pastoral training and experience enabled me to refine my outlook as an aspiring theologian (which was invaluable also to my academic work) and showed me greater opportunities for fellowship across denominational and institutional lines.

Coupled with my academic training, my work in pastoral theology informs some projects I aim to engage in as a Postdoctoral Fellow. Shortly after arriving in Utah, my wife (Katy) and I presented a paper on vulnerability and love at a retreat for military personnel of various faiths in Park City. The retreat was organised and run by Chaplain Spencer Cooper of Utah State Hospital, and I hope to continue my involvement in similar trainings.

Furthermore, I aim to develop my growing research interests in modern pastoral theology. I am particularly drawn to the question of how the liminal spaces of chaplaincy can be inhabited and negotiated by the Latter-day Saint only through sincere communion with fellow religionists, spiritualists, and humanists. The chaplain must “hold space” with others and must, therefore, roam the hinterlands (spiritually speaking) to accompany other humans in their moments of spiritual turmoil. This is something chaplains, Latter-day Saint included, share with their colleagues. Forming open and sincere relationships with those outside of the faith thus commits the Latter-day Saint to a work of selfless service: their life’s work becoming the literal embodiment of the love found in Luke 10 and Matthew 25.

I may have experienced some turbulence in traveling to, and arriving in, a desert landscape in the Rocky Mountains. And I certainly miss the love, comfort, and tranquillity of my homeland (and its benevolent rulers). But I hope my personal displacement will prove useful in the tasks, projects, and adventures that lie ahead—no matter how unexpected they may be.





## TAUNALYN FORD

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

I look back on my first year at the Maxwell Institute with gratitude and amazement. What I have accomplished is in large part due to the consecrated resources I have been given and the disciple scholars, students, and staff that surround and inspire me.

My research and writing continue to center on the history of Latter-day Saints in India where I conducted ethnographic fieldwork during 2014, 2015, and early 2020 just before the borders were closed due to the pandemic. When India finally reopened to foreign travel, I began preparations to return with support from the Maxwell Institute. The first stop on my journey in March 2022 was Coventry, England, to present a paper at the Global Mormon Studies Conference. I then embarked on two remarkable months of ethnographic research in India and Nepal and collected more than one hundred new oral history interviews. The temple under construction in Bengaluru, India, figured prominently in my fieldwork. I asked members to share their thoughts on the rendering of the temple and conducted extensive research at Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh temples in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Katmandu, Varanasi, and Bodhgaya. These interviews provide context for what it means to build a Latter-day Saint temple in a land saturated with temples. After an incredible experience in India, I traveled to Logan, Utah, to present a paper on my temple research at the Mormon History Association conference, attend meetings as a member of the MHA board, and host the awards ceremony. My travels concluded at BYU Hawaii where I attended the Proclaim Peace Conference and interviewed several Indian Latter-day Saint students.

In addition to extensive travel, I have also enjoyed time to write. My article, “Challenges and Solutions for Global Mormon History,” published in the *Journal of Mormon History*, draws from my eight years of work in India. I authored two chapters that will be published in forthcoming books. First, “Indian Caste and Gospel Culture” for an anthology on the Church in Asia, and a second chapter that looks comparatively at Scottish and Latter-day Saint missionaries in 1850s India. I also co-authored a chapter in *Restorations: Scholars in Dialogue from Community of Christ and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. My research on Mormonism in India includes an examination of RLDS/Community of Christ work on the subcontinent. This has opened



wonderful avenues of interfaith dialogue with members of the Community of Christ both formally and informally that have continued over the past year in Leister, England, and Independence, Missouri.

Transcribing, organizing, archiving, and mining hundreds of hours of oral history interview data would be an impossible challenge without the help of my amazing student research assistants. Each brings unique and valuable talents. My research team includes an anthropology major who is using my data to write a term paper and thus provide added analysis for my project. I also have two graduate-level students who have served in managerial roles and are working with me on coauthored papers for publication. Three of my assistants come from India, bringing insights from Hindu, Syrian Orthodox, and Pentecostal backgrounds. All of my research assistants contribute important insights as we meet weekly. Mentoring young disciple scholars is one of the best parts of being at the Maxwell Institute!

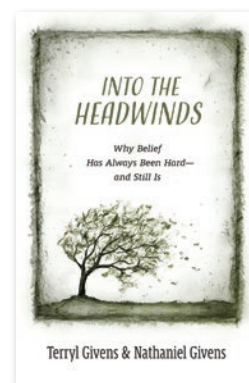
## TERRYL GIVENS

NEAL A. MAXWELL SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW

2022 has been another rich and rewarding year working with exceptional scholars and colleagues and students at the Maxwell Institute. I published two books, the first with Deseret Book for their *Let's Talk About* series, titled *Faith and Intellect*. As the title indicates, the book affirms the harmonious relationship, described in Restoration scripture, of religious faith and rational inquiry, or the unity of “heart and mind.” In addition to writing for a general Latter-day Saint audience, I believe it is important for us as Latter-day Saint scholars to engage the broader Christian community—and have worked on book projects to that end. In October, a book I co-wrote with my son Nathaniel Givens was published by the Christian publishing house Eerdmans. Its title is *Into the Headwinds: Why Faith Has Always Been Hard (And Still Is)*. The book takes the counterintuitive position that secularism is not a sufficient explanation for the decline in religious faith; ironically, part of the problem may be that we have made religious commitment too easy.

Believing that Latter-day Saints have an important perspective on Christian history, one that has more in common than we have recognized with fellow Christians who also sense something vital has been lost over the centuries, I am working on a major book project: *The Effable Love of God: A New History of Christianity*. To forward that project, I secured sponsorship from the Maxwell Institute, The Mormon Scholars Foundation, and the Wheatley Institute, to hold a two-week seminar at Pembroke College, Oxford, on the theme of Christian historiography this past August. Reverend Andrew Teal, lecturer at Oxford, participated and helped with arrangements, as did Daniel Becerra, a colleague in BYU's Department of Ancient Scripture. Ten scholars from England, Scotland, BYU, and other American institutions also participated.

During the year, I presented several faith-themed firesides to Latter-day Saint audiences at several venues in America and abroad, in person and by Zoom. In the winter semester, I taught a BYU class titled “Belief and Doubt in Life and Literature,” designed to strengthen faith in Restoration principles by situating contemporary challenges to faith in the context of a long modern history of skepticism. I also guest lectured several times in the psychology department (on





theology and gender), presented to the campus Humanities and Belief Seminar, to a faculty workshop on Christian scholarship, and three times to a group of Wheatley scholars. Finally, I employed more than half a dozen research assistants, with whom I met weekly as we studied writings of the Church Fathers in connection with my Christian history project.

## KRISTIAN HEAL

### RESEARCH FELLOW

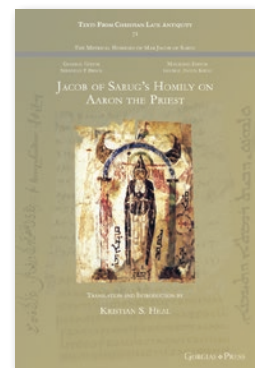
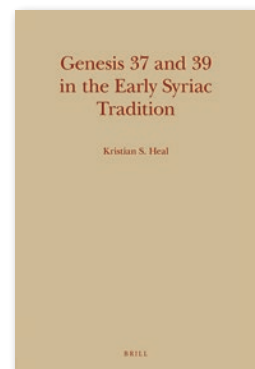
I fell in love with the Old Testament as an undergraduate studying Jewish history at University College London. For my teachers, all of whom were Jewish, it was simply the Bible, made up of three parts: the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. This book came alive as it was taught both as a source for the early history of the Jewish people, and as a text that developed over time and space. My research has not moved too far away from those early foundations, and I have spent more than two decades working on various aspects of the reception of the Old Testament in the early Christian tradition.

In 2022, I reached a major milestone in this research with the publication of a new book, from Brill Academic Publishers, on the reception of the first half of the Joseph story (Genesis 37 and 39) in early Syriac literature. The Joseph story was beloved by early Christians, both as a captivating tale of delivery and God's faithfulness, and as a story filled with foreshadowings of the life of Jesus. The story was retold multiple times and in several different genres, and it grew in the retelling, as all good stories do, absorbing both ancient Jewish traditions and creative additions. This array of Syriac texts had a long and compelling afterlife, not least in the way that they influenced the retelling of the story of Joseph in the Qur'ān.

In 2022, I was able to rediscover my love of the Old Testament in the company of a wonderful team of BYU students as we worked together on the Maxwell Institute's *Abide* podcast for the Old Testament. It was delightful to be immersed in the Old Testament for a year and to record 52 episodes of the *Abide* podcast together with the host, Joseph Stuart, ten student research assistants, and a few faculty guests. I hope to develop the work that I did in preparation for this podcast into a pair of books on the Old Testament for Latter-day Saints.

2022 also saw the publication of a landmark volume under the Maxwell Institute imprint that Jason Combs, Mark Ellison, Catherine Taylor, and I have been working on for several years. *Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints* brings together contributions by thirteen brilliant Latter-day Saint scholars exploring aspects of early Christianity of particular interest to Latter-day Saints. Together, the volume is a celebration of the lives of faith lived by our early Christian sisters and brothers. We will be talking more about this volume throughout 2023.

Other highlights for the year include the publication of another book, *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on Aaron the Priest* (Gorgias Press), and three other chapters or articles, "Preaching Christ: Scripture, Sermons, and Practical Exegesis" (Maxwell Institute), "Early Christian Biblical Interpretation," written with Carl Griffin (University of Utah Press), and a review essay on Nicholas J. Frederick's *The Bible, Mormon Scripture, and the Rhetoric of Allusivity* (*Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*).



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## RACHAEL JOHNSON

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

I was delighted to join the Maxwell Institute as a postdoctoral fellow in September 2022. After receiving my PhD in early modern European and Iberian history from the University of Virginia in 2019, I turned to independent research and writing projects; one of those has culminated in an article I'm finalizing for the Johns Hopkins' journal of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. Joining the warm, generous, and intellectually vibrant Maxwell community has been a welcome new chapter, and I am looking forward to the rich opportunities for collaboration and contributions.



This year I will be focusing on a cluster of projects related to my doctoral work concerning theologies of embodiment in Spanish Catholicism. One is a book based on my dissertation in which I explore how changing notions of the relationship between matter and spirit, as well as the secular and the profane, during the Enlightenment undergirded conflicts over practices of penance, worship, and preaching. Reformers who imbibed the dualism of Descartes and the austerity of Jansenist Catholicism found embodied—and particularly, collective—devotional practices to be a distraction or even perversion of true worship. Those practices, like passion plays, processions, and adorning sacred statues in precious jewels and fine textiles, overflowed the enlightened notion of true piety, which consisted of a disciplined mind and stilled body. I explore how many Catholics—especially indigenous and female Catholics, but elite theologians as well—defended these practices for their ability to harness the full powers of human physicality and sociability in seeking the divine.

Nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint practices and teachings on embodiment provide interesting resonances and departures from those of these Spanish Catholics. A second vein of research I'll be exploring this year is examining the reception history among nineteenth-century Catholics of Joseph Smith's ontological claims about the nature and divinity of matter. While baroque Catholic and Latter-day Saint theology diverged on the adjacent doctrines of immanence and transcendence, the fall, and exaltation, leading voices in both groups claimed that the abstraction of religion to mere belief, divorced from embodied devotion, was akin to atheism. For example, Orson Pratt wrote in 1849 that belief in a disembodied God was simply "religious Atheism," while Pedro Inguanzo Rivero, a Spanish Catholic cardinal writing in 1820, similarly wrote that "those who want nothing more than a [God of] pure spirit, and a nominal or abstract religion," would find themselves treading the path of deism to atheism.

I'm eager to explore the theological and pastoral implications of the nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint and Catholic embrace of an embodied soul; this is a project that I plan to undertake with the help of a student research assistant. As a BYU undergraduate, I flourished intellectually and spiritually through the mentorship of many research opportunities; I am eager to pay forward that boon as well as to learn from the fresh readings and thoughtful questions of a student assistant.



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## JENNIFER LANE

### NEAL A. MAXWELL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

This has been a rewarding first year here at the Maxwell Institute. My work has been enriched by great colleagues and student research associates. I feel grateful for opportunities that have opened up in this season of my life.

An important project this year was a wonderful opportunity to synthesize years of research and writing on temples, worship, ritual, and Christ's atonement in *Let's Talk about Temples and Ritual* from Deseret Book, due out in spring 2023.

I have had a couple of opportunities to return to my work on analysis and historical context for scripture. A new project was "An Overview of the Sabbath in the Synoptic Gospels: Texts and Reflections" in a volume on the Sabbath that will be coming out from BYU's Religious Studies Center next year. The other is a revised version of an earlier publication that will be coming out next year from the Religious Studies Center, "Hostility toward Jesus: Prelude to the Passion" in *Learn of Me: History and Teachings of the New Testament*, edited by John Hilton III and Nicholas Frederick.

Much of the year has also been spent working on "Knowledge and Obedience," a chapter in a forthcoming volume on Latter-day Saint theology exploring changes in the meaning of knowledge with the rise of modern thought and the value of looking back to the biblical idea of knowledge as a relationship, particularly as connected to knowledge of God.

I have enjoyed working with colleagues in the Maxwell Institute Christology initiative through the year. I am developing a draft of a volume in this series, due out in a few years, currently titled *Seek This Jesus: A Brief Theological Introduction to Glory*. Another longer-term project that I am continuing work on is currently called *Setting Our Hearts: Worship in the Book of Mormon*.

Being in Provo has brought additional opportunities to participate in various scripture study programs, including the Maxwell Institute Abide podcast, Come Follow Him podcast, and the BYUtv Come Follow Up program. It's always a privilege to work with great colleagues and discuss scriptures together.

I've been very grateful for opportunities to work with great research associates this year. Hannah Faulconer, a philosophy major, gave invaluable feedback and suggestions on much of what I've worked on this year. Peter Williams, a Czech-speaking linguistics major, was also a great help in doing research on late medieval Bohemian passion piety. Peter was a tremendous support in translating sources for a paper that I presented at Kalamazoo International Medieval Congress in May of this year, "Agnes of Bohemia's Family Legacy of Passion Piety." Looking ahead, Peter, Emma Belnap, an art history major, and I are working on a proposal for the 2023 International Medieval Conference, "Echoes of Spiritual Power: The Prague Pilgrim Badge."



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## KIMBERLY MATHESON

### RESEARCH FELLOW

I joined the Maxwell Institute this fall having just completed a PhD in Theology from Loyola University Chicago. This achievement fulfills the vision that I first glimpsed as an undergraduate here at BYU: the possibility of partnering scholarship with faith. This vision, in fact, is what led me to pursue theology in the first place. Theology is a discipline where discipleship is assumed and expected to inform one's professional work.

Imagine my delight, then, to learn that such partnerships were possible not only in the sequestered idylls of graduate school but also in real-world employment as a fulltime scholar! As I stand on the cusp of this next season in my life, I do so with deep gratitude for the generations of forebears who established a university where something like the Maxwell Institute would be possible. It is a tremendous privilege to join the ranks of the disciple-scholars housed here and across BYU campus. In this exemplary environment, I will focus on several research projects related to the Book of Mormon.

The 2022–2023 academic year will also see the presentation or publication of two smaller writing projects. The first is a reflective essay on the field of Book of Mormon study, entitled “Emboldened and Embarrassed: The Tenor of Contemporary Book of Mormon Studies and the Role of Grant Hardy” (*Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 2022). In it, I assess Grant Hardy's invaluable role in presenting the Book of Mormon to the academy and call for more confidence in the relevance of the Book of Mormon for the world at large. My second presentation will appear at the national meeting of the American Academy of Religion in November, where I will present a paper on apocalyptic themes in contemporary French philosophy.

It will also be my privilege throughout the year to continue serving on the organizing committees for the Book of Mormon Studies Association (BoMSA) and the Book of Mormon Ethics Seminar (another research initiative funded and organized through the Maxwell Institute). My service with BoMSA saw our sixth annual conference held at Utah State University in October (including a presentation of my own on Moroni's editorial work in Moroni 7), and the Book of Mormon Ethics Seminar will meet for its concluding session in the spring, followed by the production of collected papers demonstrating how the Book of Mormon might shed light on contemporary ethical concerns. My own contribution to the final collection will be an essay exploring the moral formation accomplished by the Book of Mormon on readers, asking how the Book of Mormon shapes readers who will behave in the ways needed to accomplish the book's aims.

Finally, I hope to complete this year a draft of a short volume on Moroni 7, the culmination of my time as a member of the Maxwell Institute's Christology Initiative. In this volume, I use the Nephites' sense of physical and temporal distance from Christ as a road map for contemporary discipleship at a time when Jesus has already “ascended into heaven” and when disciples might worry that “the day of miracles [has] ceased” (Moroni 7:27, 35). Through an exploration of what Moroni 7 has to say about the light of Christ, miracles, and hope, I aim to fortify modern disciples in their efforts to exercise continued faith in Christ.





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## MAX MUELLER

### SHORT-TERM RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT

I had the honor of joining the Maxwell Institute for six weeks this past summer. During that time, I traveled up and down the state of Utah—from Logan to Parowan and many parts in between—in search of Wakara, the great Ute warrior, horse thief, slave trader, and defender of Native American sovereignty. Wakara (c. 1815–1855) was also likely the first Native American baptized (1849) and ordained an elder in the church (1850) in the Great Basin. Among many other adventures, I took an evening sail with BYU faculty and elected officials from the Provo area on Utah Lake—the sacred center of Wakara’s Timpanogos Utes’ spiritual geography—to show how the lake is healing itself through partnerships between humans and non-human animals, especially the June Sucker. I also met with Wakara’s lineal, tribal, and spiritual descendants—all part of my book (with Basic Books) on Wakara. I also presented parts of the project to colleagues at the Institute, who gave invaluable feedback. This support helped me hit the ground running this fall, as I start my sabbatical, funded by an NEH public scholar fellowship.



## STEVEN PECK

### VISITING FELLOW

I have been pondering what it means to be an embodied being in the natural world—asking questions about how our senses, faith, and mind combine with the environment to give structure and meaning to our lives. This year I published a paper on these ideas in the *Journal for the Study of Religion* (2022: 35, 1), called “Latter-Day Saint Theology of a Material, Embodied Deity *vis-à-vis* Evolutionary Conceptions of Embodiment, Agency, and Matter.” This paper explores how our Latter-day Saint views of an embodied God comport with current theories about evolution, agency, and individuality to give a coherent picture of why our bodies matter. This paper complements my article in *BYU Studies* (2021: 60, 3) at the end of last year, “Each Atom an Agent?” which explores historical views of animated matter including panpsychism, the view that all things have a mind or a mind-like quality.

These papers have led me to think more about other creaturely bodies, such as those we find in birds and insects. How does Latter-day Saint theology include space for all creatures to fill the measure of their creation through physical embodiment? I am currently exploring how our ideas about the atonement can be expanded to include our fellow travelers on this earth and why they matter in a more comprehensive and expansive notion of what creation means.

As with the paper mentioned above, I’ve also continued my work in exploring how organic evolution can be reconciled with our theological ideas about creation. In addition, this year I completed a paper called “Why the Latter-day Saint community should trust science (in the same way scientists do).” This explores what science is and how it functions as an essential way to learn about our universe.

This work of reconciliation will continue in a volume in the *Introduction to Mormon Thought* series published by Illinois University Press about evolutionary biologist Duane Jeffery. Jeffery was pivotal in reshaping the scientific landscape of Latter-day Saint thought. He is rare among scientists in that he actively engaged in understanding the Church’s position on evolution and framing its relationship to the biological sciences during



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his time at BYU. In addition, Jeffery was influential in science education at the national level and within the Latter-day Saint community.

I am grateful to the Maxwell Institute for their continued work exploring how scholarly study and faith work together to forward the continuing restoration. My work on seeing how our faith and science work companionably together has been enhanced by interacting with other scholars at the Insitute. I feel so blessed to be a part of this institution as a Fellow and have the chance to work with such fine scholars and thinkers. Partaking of their spirit of faith has strengthened my own and helped me better appreciate the rich depths of our tradition.

## JOSEPH STUART

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

The 2022–2023 academic year is a season of change for me at the Maxwell Institute. I have worked since 2020 as the public communications specialist for the Institute and am excited for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in my new opportunity as a post-doctoral fellow—a position that will no doubt be made easier by my time in public communications. I am grateful for the resources—monetary, social, and intellectual—that make the Maxwell Institute a stunning locus for building faith and producing new knowledge. Some research institutes must separate the pursuit of religious, eternal truth while their researchers create peer-reviewed research. I’m grateful to be at a place where no barrier exists between building faith and building knowledge.



My research assistants are already hard at work digging through census records, letters, newspapers, and oral histories on several topics. First, students are working to help me better understand the circumstances and historical events that led to the Nation of Islam’s rise in Detroit’s Great Depression. As we work together to find sources, I’m struck by how bright and engaged BYU students improve any conversation they are included within. Students are also helping me in my work for the Century of Black Mormons Project, which seeks to find biographical information for any person of Black African descent baptized into a church with ties to Joseph Smith’s founding revelations from 1830–1930. It is a joy to see them discover how their expertise in genealogy, creative writing, theology, and American history can lead to the rediscovery of past Latter-day Saints.

While sources for the founding of the Nation of Islam and early Black Latter-day Saints are sometimes scarce, I’m already pleased with the questions my research assistants are asking. They’re helping me think through my research and pushing it in new directions. In short, my students are helping to shape my research agenda by digging for sources, asking questions, and listening for answers.

This year I will present at four conferences on research related to my work on African American religious history. First, I will present to the American Academy of Religion on how the confluence of schools and religion during the Great Depression reveals the state’s role in religious freedom. I’ll next present at the American Society for Church History on learning to read government documents “against the grain” to reclaim marginalized voices whose other thoughts and words have been lost. I have further plans to share my research on the relationship between religion, schools, and the state at a conference on civil religion at Elon University. Finally, I’ll share research at the Organization of American Historians’ conference on how historians can better think about the relationship between religion and the state through the medium of prisons, punishment, and redemption narratives.

I plan to write several pieces this year for academic journals and edited collections related to African American religions in the twentieth-century United States. Knowing how important it is for scholars to speak



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to the public and fellow scholars, I also have plans and invitations to deliver several public lectures, write historically informed opinion pieces, and contribute to audio and video productions. It will be a busy year. I can't think of a place that could help me more in my goals than the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.

## CATHERINE GINES TAYLOR

### HUGH W. NIBLEY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

As it is time to report on my scholarly work of the past year, I want to first express my appreciation for all the support I have received to make this work unfold. Most especially, my gratitude is directed toward Spencer Fluhman and my dear colleagues at the Maxwell Institute; these are my people, my home team.

Early in the year, as co-director with Spencer Fluhman, I started orchestrating the Maxwell Institute France Mentored Fieldwork Study for seven BYU students. Following a proposal for student funding, we received a generous donation from David and Kristin Turnbull that allowed these fortunate BYU students to visit France and be immersed in the study of sarcophagi in support of my current research projects (see pages 68–69 in this report).

A major project occupying much of this past year has been my role as co-editor of *Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints*, together with Jason Combs, Mark Ellison, and Kristian Heal, published fall 2022. My own chapter in the volume, “Inclining Christian Hearts: Work for the Dead,” discusses the many ways early Christians worked out benevolent and salvific works for their kindred dead. This project has been a labor of love; we the editors desire to share the moving faith of our ancient Christian heritage in accessible and compelling ways.

As part of our *Ancient Christians* book, our vision was to include a rich collection of art and artifacts from the early Christian world or representing early Christian ideas and practices. Mark Ellison and I joined forces to curate over a hundred images that complement the text. Each image is carefully explained in captions that we wrote to help readers more fully understand the richly faithful world of early Christians; the images stand out in their own right as witnesses to that world and as evidence for belief, both independent of and in concert with ancient texts.

After preparing a detailed proposal, I am happy to report that Baylor University Press will be publishing my upcoming monograph, *The Lady at the Gate: Personified Wisdom and Christian Sarcophagi in Gaul*. The manuscript is well and truly underway, and I look forward to working with my editors in bringing it to press in 2024.

August brought the advent of the Oxford Christian Historiography Seminar held at Pembroke College, University of Oxford, organized by Terryl Givens. I joined a group of the brightest Latter-day Saint scholars working in the field of late ancient Christianity over a variety of disciplines. We were pleased to be hosted by our friend, the Reverend Dr. Andrew Teal, and to spend our days working together in seminar. My specific presentation and discussion featured material Christianity in late ancient Gaul with particular focus on sarcophagi from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. While in the UK, I was also asked to review two book proposals for T&T Clark Bloomsbury, London, on topics relevant to my disciplinary expertise.

During the month of September, I was privileged to spend time in the archives and library at the Musée Départemental Arles Antique. I was able to utilize specialist materials for two chapters in my upcoming book and to also develop a thesis and argument for an additional article. During my time in Arles, I met with the Director of the museum, Romy Wyche, to discuss our mutual interests in Roman sarcophagi. I want to thank



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the excellent staff at the museum, especially Alienor Tallagrand and Valerie Clenas, who have provided me with access to files, photographs, and documents necessary to my project.

This autumn, as the *Society of Biblical Literature* convenes in Denver, I will be chairing a session of papers. As part of the steering committee for the Art and Religions in Antiquity section, I have worked with the other members in organizing the sessions for this year's conference.

It has been a privilege to be the inaugural Hugh W. Nibley Postdoctoral Fellow at the Maxwell Institute over these past four years. My colleagues are the best and brightest people I have ever worked with and I will never forget them as I move on to other opportunities. I have found home in my friends at the Institute and find deep comfort in knowing that our sociality is an enduring thing.

## RYAN TOBLER

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

It was my privilege to join the Maxwell Institute as a postdoctoral fellow in early September 2022, after completing my doctoral work in the history of North American religions at Harvard University. I came to the Institute knowing something of the faculty and having enjoyed an undergraduate experience at BYU. My expectations were high—and yet I have not been disappointed by the fine group of academics and administrators who together make up the Institute's community of disciple-scholars. After extended periods of study at the University of Chicago and Harvard, the environment of the Institute has felt distinct and edifying.



Most of my work at the Institute still belongs to the future, but over the past few months I've laid the groundwork for an expanding research agenda. My primary focus is the expansion and development of my doctoral dissertation, "American Sacraments: Religion and Ritual in the Early United States," which I'm reshaping into the form of a book. One of the initial catalysts of my interest in this subject began many years ago when, as a young temple-going Latter-day Saint, I became intrigued by the highly stylized or "ritualized" aspects of religious practice that are characteristic of the temple. I also was intrigued by the dissonances and anxieties around these practices in contemporary American culture. My dissertation turned out to be partly an intellectual and cultural genealogy of these issues, and a key chapter of it explores what I define as a "sacramental turn" among early Latter-day Saints that transformed their movement from a frontier faith into a tradition that found genuine connection to God through solemn religious rituals.

My attention is currently focused on another component of this story—the fascinating process by which American evangelicals transformed Christian worship in the nineteenth-century United States. This transformation was complex but came about primarily, I argue, because of evangelicals' deep commitment to conversion experience, which led them incidentally to marginalize and erode the traditional Christian sacraments and conventional logics of worship. Evangelicals replaced these with a new set of revival rituals oriented toward conversion. Given the emerging predominance of evangelicalism at the time, this shift represents a critical context for how other groups, including Latter-day Saints, conceived and developed their own forms of worship. In early 2023 I will also contribute a chapter on evangelicalism, entitled "Evangelical Proliferation and Power in the Early United States," to a forthcoming book on American religion and politics.

I also hope during 2023 to begin mentoring research assistants and to further develop an essay long in-progress, entitled "Of Altars and Communion Tables: Latter-Day Saints and the Trajectories of Christian Worship." The piece centers on the remarkable presence of *both* altars and communion tables among Latter-day Saints, two religious implements that have traditionally been regarded as antithetical to one another. This



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unusual coupling offers a useful point of departure for exploring some broader questions, including how Latter-day Saints fit within the history of modern Christian worship, how our practices reflect and mediate the divisions between Protestants and Catholics, and what we as Latter-day Saints can learn about ourselves by situating our worship within broader theological and liturgical contexts.

## JOHN TURNER

### SHORT-TERM RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT

This summer I was the recipient of a short-term fellowship from the Maxwell Institute. The experience proved invaluable to me in several ways. It allowed me to spend about six weeks in the archives at BYU's HBLL Special Collections and at the Church History Library. Even for historians in a digital age, there's no substitute for having the time to sift through archival collections. Time produces leads and helps lead to ideas. I also appreciated the opportunity to discuss my research with the many good folk at the Institute. They offered very helpful and frank feedback on an in-progress book chapter. Moreover I'm grateful for many unexpected experiences. While at Deseret Book, I picked up the Maxwell Institute author Adam Miller's just-published *Original Grace*, which I found profound and poignant. I learned about the Institute's Christology project and had the chance to meet some of its scholars whose work lies far from my field.



## ROSALYNDE FRANDSEN WELCH

### RESEARCH FELLOW

I arrived at Brigham Young University on July 1 and practically skipped down the hall to my new office, so happy was I to begin my new job as research fellow and associate director at the Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship. As a grateful alumna of BYU, I'd long been a supporter of the University's unique mission—and a lover of the beautiful mountains that shelter its campus. I became involved with the Institute about five years ago both as a member of its outside advisory, executive, and imprint boards, and as a scholar contributing to the *Book of Mormon Brief Theological Introductions*, the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, the Latter-day Saint Theology Seminar, and the *Seek this Jesus* research initiative. I was already immersed in the workings and the mission of the Institute and its sponsoring University, and was delighted to make it official in July.

My first months in our small-but-growing research community have been a delightful whirlwind of getting acquainted with new colleagues, learning the administrative ropes, and diving into scholarly projects. My scholarly focus is Latter-day Saint scripture and theology, and I arrived at the Institute trailing projects and publications. My article, "The Secular Syllabus and the Sacred Book: Literary Scholars Approach the Book of Mormon," appeared in the 2022 issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. In this article, I examine the wave of secular scholars who have begun to study the Book of Mormon using the tools of literary analysis. Additionally, I published a chapter in the Institute's recent Living Faith volume *Every Needful Thing: Essays on the Life of the Mind and the Heart* (forthcoming 2023), in which I take stock of the global Church community of women scholars and professionals.



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The research resources made available by the Institute and BYU have greatly accelerated my current writing projects. This fall I spoke at the Book of Mormon Studies Association on the theology of Christ's premortal body in Ether 3. That paper will become part of the book I am currently writing on the Restoration's unique theology of the preexistent Jesus Christ, a volume that will be part of the Institute's *Seek This Jesus* initiative. Much of my time was also given to a manuscript titled *Seven Gospels*, in which my co-author and I reflect on the seven capsule accounts of Christ's life that punctuate the Book of Mormon. Additionally, I prepared two edited volumes for publication, one on the history of Latter-day Saint theology and the other, for the Latter-day Saint Theology Seminar, on D&C 25.

I've been privileged to serve in an administrative capacity as the associate director of the Institute, focusing especially on building our collegial community—the easiest job in the world given the stellar quality of our faculty. I enjoyed working with an undergraduate research assistant this summer, getting a handle on our tradition's scholarly theology of Christ. Furthermore, my new academic home has greatly increased my opportunities to speak directly to Latter-day Saints in various podcasts, magazine pieces, firesides, and symposia.

I no longer skip down the hall to my office, no doubt to my colleagues' relief. But I enter the Institute every morning with a spring in my step fueled by gratitude for a scholarly community united around a common commitment to consecrate our intellectual offerings to the unfolding Restoration.





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## RESEARCH STAFF

### NICOLE ISSAC

This year, I have had the privilege of working with Dr. Taunalyn Ford on her special project researching the history of Latter-day Saints in India. Having grown up in and served a mission in Southern India myself, I feel privileged to play a part in recording and retelling the stories of hundreds of pioneers in India. Dr. Ford has a large and comprehensive archive of oral history interviews of the Saints in India. I have been involved in conducting a few interviews alongside Dr. Ford. I have been engaged in mining these interviews for common threads. My ability to speak Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada has also come in handy for this project. Since my background is in public health, I am trying to focus on how COVID has affected the Saints in India.


I am humbled to work with Dr. Ford because I get to walk a mile or two with my fellow Saints in India. Through this project, my testimony of the gospel is also strengthened multifold. These are stories of sacrifice, miracles, and hardships. But most importantly, they are filled with light. As our master teacher taught, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” The Institute’s mission to “support scholars whose work inspires and fortifies Latter-day Saints in their testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and engages the world of religious ideas” has blessed my life and the lives of others such that we are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”



### GRACE SOELBERG

The opportunity to work at the Maxwell Institute this past year has been phenomenal. Getting to know the wonderful staff and scholars and to work beside them has been an honor.

Through this position I was able to continue my work researching the life and legacy of BYU’s first Black student, Dr. Norman Wilson Sr. In April, I traveled to Louisiana where I spent several days with his descendants filming oral histories. I also facilitated the transfer of family documents to BYU Special Collections.

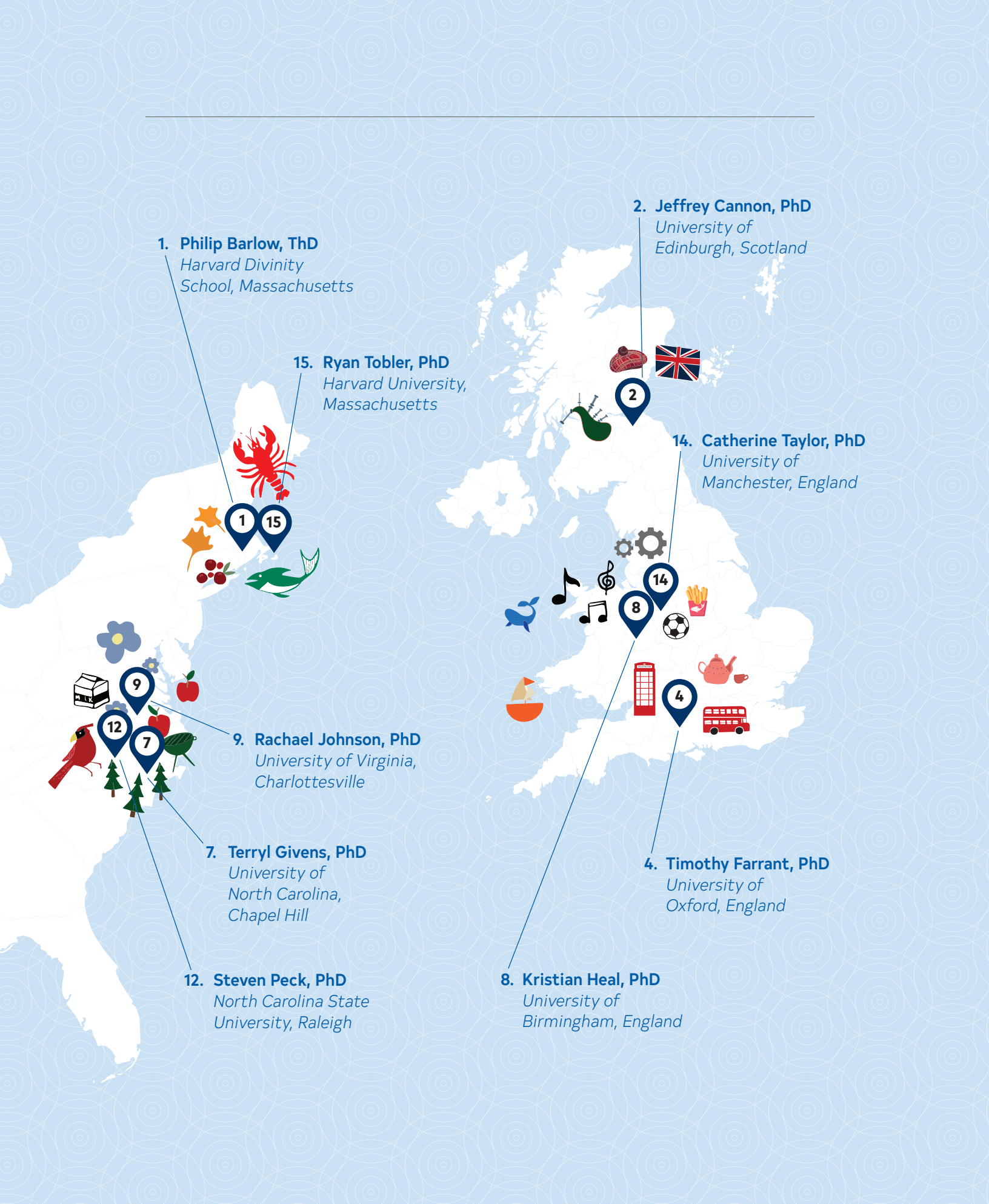
I am also eternally grateful for the opportunity to travel to West Africa with the Church and the NAACP on the Amos C. Brown Fellowship to Ghana. Over 12 days we dissected the process and legacy of the Atlantic Slave trade and created invaluable connections with members and non-members alike who are striving for racial harmony and justice. 



# Where We Were Trained







1. Philip Barlow, ThD  
Harvard Divinity  
School, Massachusetts

15. Ryan Tobler, PhD  
Harvard University,  
Massachusetts

2. Jeffrey Cannon, PhD  
University of  
Edinburgh, Scotland

14. Catherine Taylor, PhD  
University of  
Manchester, England

9. Rachael Johnson, PhD  
University of Virginia,  
Charlottesville

7. Terryl Givens, PhD  
University of  
North Carolina,  
Chapel Hill

12. Steven Peck, PhD  
North Carolina State  
University, Raleigh

4. Timothy Farrant, PhD  
University of  
Oxford, England

8. Kristian Heal, PhD  
University of  
Birmingham, England







# Inspiring Learning at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute

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*“We believe a world yearning for hope and joy needs the graduates of Brigham Young University (BYU). As disciples of Jesus Christ, BYU graduates are motivated by love for God and His children. BYU graduates are directed by living prophets and prepared to serve, lift, and lead. This preparation demands a unique university model: at BYU, belief enhances inquiry, study amplifies faith, and revelation leads to deeper understanding.*

*At BYU, helping students to develop their full divine potential is central to both our teaching and our scholarship.”<sup>1</sup>*

1. “For the Benefit of the World,” BYU Core Brand Message (10 August 2022).

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# Inspiring Learning: France

The Maxwell Institute France Mentored Fieldwork Study was conceived and organized by Dr. Catherine Gines Taylor to be an opportunity for seven BYU art history students to visit France and, under her tutelage and the wise leadership of Spencer Fluhman, to acquaint students with art historical fieldwork, the use of art and images as primary source data, and the religious communities of our early Christian forebears. The students learned to “read” sarcophagi and draw conclusions from scholarly texts and source readings about the life and beliefs of these earliest Saints (Christianity was already present here by the end of the first century). Students studied the local legendary accounts surrounding Mary Magdalene, who, according to tradition, spent the last decades of her life in southern France; they visited archaeological museums and sites associated with late ancient Christianity. Dr. Jennifer Lane shared her research findings on medieval Christians with the students, mentoring them in appreciating their art and culture as the group traveled from Provence north to Paris, exploring together important collections of religious art and museums. This life-enriching experience was made possible through the generous support of David and Kristin Turnbull, who are deeply committed to experiential learning opportunities for students at BYU.







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# Student Staff

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## RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Madilyn Abbe  
Nicholas Axt  
Noelle Baer  
Derek Baker  
Austin Ball  
Sydney Ballif  
Emma Belnap  
Truman Callens  
Dorie Cameron  
Amisha Choudhary  
Jacob Dayton  
Margaret Dye  
David Eastley  
Abigail Ellis  
Ashley Pun Evenson  
Jacob Farnsworth  
Hannah Faulconer  
Shaelyn Garside  
Aaron Gorner  
McKay Hammarstrom  
Amelia Holbrook-Brown  
Andrew Jones  
Grace Law  
Carolyn Lowman  
Abigail Maccabee  
Nicholas Madsen  
Nadia Mando  
Jeffrey Matheson  
Garrett Maxwell  
Christopher Miner  
Ian Moon

Joseph Nielson  
Andrew Osborn  
Elaine Prathiksha  
Isaac Richards  
Kaitlyn Richardson  
Ryder Seamons  
Beck Seamons  
Isabel Sirrine  
Zachary Stevenson  
Isaac Theobald  
Whitney Watt  
Elena Welch  
Peter Williams  
Janai Wright

## OFFICE ASSISTANTS

Anne Dallon  
Holly Graff  
Allison Hunter  
Lucy Lacanienta





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# Student Reflections

## **MADILYN ABBE, HAMILTON, VIRGINIA**

I have loved working at the Maxwell Institute and getting to witness and participate in rigorous scholarship in a field that's very important to me. From my time here, I've learned about the compatibility between love and justice. My understanding of salvation and the role of grace has been augmented. Getting to witness the intellectual work behind the scenes has confirmed to me that faith and intellect can go hand in hand. I've also learned a myriad of applicable life skills. I'm accustomed to the detailed, methodical approach necessary for rigorous scholarship on specific topics. Being in charge of image copyrights, I've also refined my organizational skills. Overall, I'm grateful for the chance to work at the Maxwell Institute for all the things it has taught me.



## **NOELLE BAER, LOGAN, UTAH**

Working on the Book of Mormon Art Catalog with Jennifer Champoux has opened my eyes to the ways individuals from all around the world experience devotion through art. As I have looked at the variety of images collected for the project, I am reminded that each work of art was created by a unique individual. Though all of God's children are different, He knows and loves them infinitely and intimately. Not only does He know them by name, but He is eager to help them grow closer to Him through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. This project has challenged me not only to become more familiar with the Book of Mormon, but has challenged the way I think about devotion, helping me to embrace and appreciate new, unfamiliar perspectives from all around the world.



## **SYDNEY BALLIF, FALLBROOK, CALIFORNIA**

Latter-day Saints have an affinity for the word convert. It marries our ideals of missionary work and our glorious conception of Christ's atonement. I would consider myself converted, converted to my faith tradition and to the Lord. Despite being born in the covenant, along the way I've had to make conscious and consecrated choices about how to live out my discipleship. I had to parse out the difference between autonomy and agency. I've felt God's love and tried to be incrementally better each day. My research for Dr. Rachel Cope this past semester included swimming deep into early American Christian conversion narratives. In doing so, I was made alive to a new flavor of conversion. These eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century newborn believers were shaken to the light and love of God. They gave up their follies, farms, and families to know Him. As an aspiring scholar and budding gatherer of Israel, I was buoyed up by the firsthand accounts of these men and women desperately seeking and receiving aid and answers before the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ. Embedded with this history I sifted through, I found a grand and palpable manifestation of God's unending grace.



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**EMMA BELNAP, PHOENIX, ARIZONA**

Working at the Maxwell Institute has helped me strengthen my research skills. I feel like I've gained an understanding of what real, in-depth research looks like, and that has helped me become a better researcher myself. I feel so blessed to be working on the projects that I am—both with Jennifer Lane and Jenny Champoux. Dr. Lane is the kind of scholar I want to grow up to be like: she is patient, kind, and, above all, humble. I am in awe of how intelligent she is and how little she lets that affect her ego. She is someone who values ideas, wherever and whoever they come from, and my life is better because Dr. Lane is in it. Jenny Champoux is also someone I want to emulate now and in my future career. She is a natural leader and is excellent at recognizing people's strengths. She makes every member of her team feel uniquely valued, assigning tasks that play to our strengths and taking a genuine interest in our lives. She has worked so hard on the Book of Mormon Art Catalog, and I could not be prouder to be working on this project. Being a research assistant at the Maxwell Institute has helped me become a better student and, more importantly, the examples of those I work with have made me want to be a better person.

**TRUMAN CALLENS, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**

Working with Dr. Heal over the past year has allowed me the opportunity to deepen my understanding of the Bible as communication from God. I have been able to investigate the ways in which God interacts with His children and thus understand how God might interact with me. Having the chance to work on and be on a podcast was an amazing opportunity to develop the skills of communicating insights and teaching in an inspired way.

Through Dr. Heal and my time at the Maxwell Institute, I've learned that great learners are great questioners. Both in an academic environment as well as a spiritual one, questions are the means by which one makes progress. Finding the right questions is often more important than finding answers. The guidance I've received from interacting with the scholars at the Maxwell Institute has been the most valuable resource in the pursuit of my academic and vocational goals.

**ANNE DALLON, SPANISH FORK, UTAH**

I love working at the Maxwell Institute. Hearing about all the scholars' research and viewpoints has really expanded my understanding of the gospel. Through their example I've strengthened my testimony. I feel very valued and important as a person even though I just sit at the front desk and answer emails. The Maxwell Institute is the best place to work on campus.

**JACOB DAYTON, PROVO, UTAH**

I, like so many fellow Latter-day Saints, have been richly blessed by Dr. Givens's profound and refreshing insights into LDS theology, particularly regarding the Atonement of Jesus Christ and God's role as our loving Father. My mind has been constantly lifted and my horizons broadened as I have explored with Dr. Givens and my brilliant peers the richness of Restoration teachings. But what I appreciate most about working with Dr. Givens is his deep care and concern for all those who have or are experiencing challenges to their faith and their commitment to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including myself, and how he provides a considerate and affirming space to explore those challenges.





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**MAGGIE DYE, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND**

I have worked as a research assistant for Dr. Morgan Davis for a few semesters now. This opportunity has been absolutely wonderful for me. Researching the Quran and the Book of Mormon has been a deeply spiritual experience. I have learned that there are spiritual truths in books other than our church's scripture canon. I have learned to look for literary patterns and to read in historical context to gain deeper meaning from the text. This has been invaluable for me, as it has helped me to understand.



Being a research assistant has challenged me to become a better and more organized student. It has improved my research skills, as I have had to look for less accessible sources. Sometimes I even have to translate sources I have found back into English so I can study them. But this has been an excellent experience for me, because as I have become better at researching for Dr. Davis, I have become better at my academic studies and research. I believe I would never have improved like that without my experience being a research assistant here at the Maxwell Institute.

**DAVID EASTLEY, PROVO, UTAH**

Dr. Heal's influence has been instrumental in my development as a scholar in the way he has allowed and encouraged intellectual joy. Rather than confining his research assistants to specific avenues of thought, Dr. Heal invites us to work in such a way that we can expand our minds and our souls in the joy of learning. He invites introspective scholarship, which has allowed me to personally grow during our research. This has made this research position deeply meaningful to me, as I have consistently discovered additional insights as I've pondered my readings. Dr. Heal practices what he teaches and is a pleasure to work with.

**ABBY ELLIS, KAYSVILLE, UTAH**

For almost two years I have worked with Dr. Heal on a variety of different projects, from compiling Old Testament bibliographies to helping get manuscripts ready for publication. I've read letters from early Christian theologians, learned about Old Testament writings I'd never heard of before, and helped organize students for this year's Abide podcast. I am grateful for the variety of jobs Dr. Heal has given me and for the knowledge I have received both for my future career and for my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Before this job, I didn't know how much scholarship the Maxwell Institute produces and publishes. Working here has broadened my understanding of "[engaging] the work of religious ideas." I will admit I have worked with things that are far beyond my understanding, but these experiences have taught me that there is always more to learn. Our knowledge is not yet complete and the scholars here at the Maxwell Institute play an important role in helping us grapple with what we know and process what we do not.

**ASHLEY PUN EVENSON, PORTLAND, OREGON**

The Maxwell Institute embodies the scripture in Doctrine and Covenants 93:36, "The glory of God is intelligence." Working here has allowed me to come closer to Christ as I've listened to the testimonies of the scholars in their lectures, as I've taken their pictures, even in the hallways of the Institute. It has inspired me to glorify God through seeking knowledge and intelligence in spiritual matters as well as temporal matters.



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**JACOB FARNSWORTH, DRAPER, UTAH**

My name is Jacob Farnsworth and I have worked at the Maxwell Institute for over a year now. It has been a very enriching experience for me. I have had the privilege to work with Taunaly Ford and study the development of the church in India. I have helped transcribe many interviews with firsthand accounts of members and converts describing their experiences joining and being in the church. This has helped strengthen my faith because I have heard about the tremendous faith these people exercise daily just to worship the Lord. It makes me want to strive to be a more devoted disciple of Jesus Christ in my own life. I am very grateful for this opportunity to learn from and work with so many spiritual and engaging people.

**SHAELYN GARSIDE, SMITHFIELD, UTAH**

Working with the Maxwell Institute and Dr. Ford has been a stretching and enthralling experience. A new degree of autonomy was offered that both excited and daunted me; it didn't seem possible that my *job* could include things I already love to do, thinking and analyzing and learning. Negotiating these unfamiliar waters has expanded my capabilities to make meaningful connections and has expanded my awareness of what is possible for scholars and individuals to accomplish as we all try to understand our world just a little better. Many thanks to Dr. Ford and our team, who have encouraged my ideas, questions, and passions in ways that have facilitated personal and professional growth.

**HOLLY GRAFF, OREM, UTAH**

I always say that working at the Maxwell Institute is the best job on campus and I wholeheartedly believe that. Forming personal relationships with each of the scholars has definitely been one of the best aspects of my time here. Not only does each of them produce inspiring work, but our daily interactions always leave me feeling better than I was before. Everyone in the office genuinely cares about one another. I've learned so much while working here and know I will continue to learn. I'm grateful for the experiences the Maxwell Institute has provided for me and the relationships that have been built.

**MCKAY HAMMARSTROM, YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA**

I've been working for Dr. Barlow since May of this year. I wasn't sure what to expect, but I'm happy to say that it's been a wonderful experience. Not only has it been a good job, but it's also been intellectually rewarding. Dr. Barlow has had me review Heidegger's concept of time and its relation to death, time in the Doctrine and Covenants, literature (both scholarly and popular) on the War in Heaven, and recent trends in religious historiography. Naturally, all of these topics were interesting in their own right and continue to be. But, for me, what made them all the more fascinating was their connection to the restored gospel and Dr. Barlow's thoughtful interaction with them. Perhaps more than anything, though, I've just enjoyed my meetings with Dr. Barlow, where I always look forward to taking the gospel as seriously as I do the rest of my academic studies. I basically took the job on something of a whim. I'm glad that I did and look forward to doing more work for Dr. Barlow in the future.

**KAITLYN HILLAM, FARMINGTON, UTAH**

For my job, I have worked as a research assistant for Dr. Cope, searching for early Latter-day Saint conversion accounts. This research has changed the way I view my own personal conversion, as I have realized that true conversion means vulnerability and the willingness to hear the Lord's voice. I am so grateful for the one-on-one research mentoring that I have received from Dr. Cope, and for the unique opportunity to have a research job as an undergraduate. I am certain that this experience will serve me well as I pursue a PhD in early American history.









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**ALLIE HUNTER, IRVINE, CALIFORNIA**

I am consistently enriched by sharing office space with the scholars at the Maxwell Institute. As I make payments and transcribe podcasts, I get to have small, yet meaningful conversations where I get to know these remarkable individuals. What has blessed me about working here is how the Maxwell Institute opens up the way I think about theology and religious studies. It has also strengthened my faith in Jesus Christ and his restored gospel. In my work responsibilities I have learned about precision, accuracy, as well as interpersonal communication with people I have never met before. I feel in debt to those who have supported my growth and spirituality here.



**ANDREW JONES, CORVALLIS, OREGON**

Studying the Doctrine and Covenants with Dr. Johnson has been enlightening. Before, I'd never had a relationship with this book of scripture, and I didn't feel comfortable with some of the rhetoric. But now that I have a deeper understanding of how the book came to be, I feel a lot more comfortable engaging with the text and even applying it to my own life. That is especially true because I know this research is contributing to a published book, which will help others to engage with the Doctrine and Covenants more deeply as well.



**LUCY LACANIENTA, SALEM, OREGON**

Though I've only spent a few months with the Maxwell Institute, I've come to appreciate all that it is. I love being surrounded by the continuous disciple scholarship and environment of discussion; it helps me to be more curious about what is happening around me and look for questions I can help to answer. I've practiced practical skills like podcast editing and been able to learn from hands-on office experience. I'm grateful for the opportunities the Institute presents for us, as students, to learn from and with scholars in specialized fields. My time here has enriched my experience at this university and inspired my own desire to learn "by study and also by faith."



**GRACE LAW, ALPINE, UTAH**

I've been working with Dr. Ford for over a year now and I have learned so much. Not only have I learned a lot about India, the culture and the church there, but I've also been able to make connections with experiences in my life and experiences I've had in the church. I think this research is important, and it has strengthened my testimony in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints being a global church. The gospel truly is for everyone, no matter their nationality, religious, or economic background.



**CAROLYN LOWMAN, TEHACHAPI, CALIFORNIA**

Working for the Maxwell Institute has been a wonderful experience. Working with religious scholars framed within the Latter-day Saint faith is absolutely priceless. This research position has benefitted me in multiple ways. One of the most important things that I have learned while working with scholars at the Maxwell Institute was where to go with my questions. This job has helped me reform my questions, concerns, wonders, and thoughts into a framework of faith. I will be forever grateful for this time working with Latter-day Saint academics.



**ABI MACCABEE, SPRINGVILLE, UTAH**

Working as a research assistant for Dr. Cope has been a fulfilling and impactful experience. My understanding of church history and research has grown immensely. My admiration for the early saints of the church has expanded as I have come to know more about their lives through the primary sources we analyze. I will always be grateful for this position at the Maxwell Institute. I am confident that the knowledge and skills that I have attained through working for the Maxwell Institute will stay with me throughout my life.





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**JEFF MATHESON, KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON**

Working at the Maxwell Institute has been insightful for multiple reasons. It has definitely showed me how diverse the field of Mormon Studies is. I work with Daniel Becerra on questions about God's emotions in the Book of Mormon. Because of his training in early Christianity and the New Testament, Dr. Becerra has been able to provide valuable insights about the nature of divine emotion. I think I've come to understand Mormon scripture in new ways because of that. It is really inspiring to see how much work goes into the research and the kinds of results that we can find. It has been a faith-promoting experience.

**GARRETT MAXWELL, BOISE, IDAHO**

It has been my great pleasure to assist Dr. Morgan Davis in putting together the first book-length study of the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon. One of my main goals coming into my university education years ago was to articulate a personal theology of religions that accounts for the scriptural and prophetic phenomenon that is the Qur'an. Working on this project has brought me closer to that goal than ever before, and I believe that a proper theology of religions is requisite for any aspiring disciple-scholar. Dr. Davis has been a friend and exemplar to me. I have also had the pleasure of working with Dr. Terryl Givens mining early Christian writings, seeking to bring to the spotlight various important yet neglected inflection points in early Christian theological developments. Dr. Givens works with an indefatigable urgency that I cannot help but admire both scholastically and personally. It has been my delight to assist in bringing to fruition some of these momentous projects.

**ANDREW OSBORN, DRAPER, UTAH**

I have loved being able to work with like-minded individuals throughout this past year at the Maxwell Institute. While working for Professor Ford, my group and I have been able to have rewarding conversations about the intersection between church culture and regional cultures, the role that the Indian caste system plays in the church, and so much more. My faith has been strengthened as I have been able to surround myself with great thinkers and participate in uplifting dialogue with them.

**ISAAC RICHARDS, REXBURG, IDAHO**

Working with Dr. Taunalyne Ford in the Maxwell Institute has been one of the best things I've done at BYU. I've been helping with the gathering, transcription, and analysis of 200+ oral history interviews of members of the Church in India. Since I served my mission in India, this historical project is deeply personal and important to me. I've also really enjoyed the talents and skills I've developed in the course of my research. I've gained hard skills with software like Otter.ai, soft skills like researching and writing, and even been able to participate in leadership opportunities such as helping interview, hire, train, and mentor new research assistants. Best of all, reading the testimonies and stories of the faith-filled saints in India has always strengthened me spiritually. I'm grateful that this research position has helped me continue to develop facility in new disciplines and new methods, like ethnography and comparative theology. As always, we've only kept on raising more questions than we answer.

**BECK SEAMONS, DRAPER, UTAH**

Working as a research assistant at the Maxwell Institute has been the most spiritually strengthening and intellectually enlarging part of my BYU experience. The research skills I have gained from hours reading in the HBL's Special Collections, searching through online databases, and combing through old newspaper articles will be applicable with any career path that I choose. I am beyond grateful for the mentorship of the Maxwell Institute's scholars, especially Dr. Steven Peck. His example of seeking truth in both the secular and religious has shaped my outlook on both education and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



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**RYDER SEAMONS, DRAPER, UTAH**

This year I was fortunate to continue my Maxwell Institute work into law school by working on a book with Dean Justin Collings. The book is a brief theological exploration of divine law in the Doctrine & Covenants. Dean Collings's writings have left an impression on me, and our work together has changed the way I think about God's law and our relationship with it—the law is not so much about things we should do, but what we should become. As always, I feel deep gratitude that the Maxwell Institute exists and that I get to be a small part of it. My experience at the Maxwell has taught me how to discover personal spiritual truth, and the Maxwell community has filled my life with meaning.

**ISABEL SIRRINE, DRAPER, UTAH**

I'm a senior here at BYU, studying Portuguese, and in the process of applying to medical school. I am currently doing research with Dr. Jeffrey Cannon, exploring African readings of scripture through their use of the Book of Mormon. I served my mission in Mozambique, so this topic is especially close to my heart. Through my research, I have been able to strengthen my faith by studying other people's testimonies. I love every minute of it.

**ZACH STEVENSON, PURCELLVILLE, VIRGINIA**

I'm currently doing work for Joseph Stuart on the Century of Black Mormons project. This work involves reviewing primary sources (census documents, newspaper articles, draft cards, etc.) and using them to write biographies of Black members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Though this work is sometimes tedious, the painstaking process of constructing stories out of snippets of someone's life seems to me to be enormously meaningful because, well, what is discipleship if not continuous, careful investment in lives other than one's own? Potential theological implications aside, I feel honored to be involved in a project that seeks to celebrate the lives of Saints who secured a place in the Body of Christ even in the face of prejudice, ignorance, and indifference.

**ISAAC THEOBALD, PAPILLION, NEBRASKA**

Working with Dr. Morgan Davis has really opened my eyes about how our faith is similar to Islam. What seemed foreign before is now more familiar. Because of our readings and discussions about the Qur'an, I have been able to connect with the people of Jordan in a way other students have not. I am grateful for these new relationships that I have been privileged to have because of Dr. Davis's work.

**WHITNEY WATT, PROVO, UTAH**

I have learned much in the past ten months at the Maxwell Institute. I am an audiovisual technician. I edit podcasts for Abide and have learned many different skills: learning how to use Adobe Audition, cleaning up the audio, and stitching it to make it sound clean and clear for the listeners. I work remotely, and because of this, I have learned to manage my time to balance out the importance of school, work, and other duties in my life. Even though it is hard to maintain this balance, I am grateful for what I have learned and strive to find that balance every day. I have gained a lot of spiritual knowledge and have grown my testimony from the teaching found in the Old Testament. I knew only about the most famous of prophets in the Old Testament, and it wasn't until reading it this year and listening to the insights and thoughts of the speakers while editing the podcast, that I feel like I understand this book of scripture. I am so grateful that I have this opportunity to work here and gain more experience both in life skills and spiritual growth.






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**PETER WILLIAMS, SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA**

It's been wonderful working at the Maxwell Institute this year. I've worked with Dr. Lane to research Czech medieval royal piety, helping to translate Czech scholarship about the topic. As I've studied the use of relics by the Czech royal family, especially Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, I've gained a greater appreciation for the ways other people and religions show their faith and try to connect spiritually to Jesus Christ. Because I served my mission in the Czech Republic, I have also enjoyed being able to practice and improve my Czech language skills, as well as learn more about the history of the country I served in. I also had the privilege of working with Dr. Ford over the summer to help transcribe oral history interviews of Church members in India. It was incredible to hear their stories and messages of faith through all the trials they've faced. Their faith has inspired me to stay committed to living my own faith and staying true to my testimony, despite trials and confusion. Working on both of these projects in the Maxwell Institute has improved my own scholarship and research skills immeasurably, and I am grateful for the opportunities and growth I've seen this year.



**JANAI WRIGHT, AUSTIN, TEXAS**

It is an inexhaustible pleasure to work (though that is a word I dislike to describe the activity in which we engage at the Maxwell Institute) at a place and with people who understand well the sanctity of learning and its power to acquaint humanity with God. Most especially, it is a soul-expanding experience to converse, think, and engage with and under the mentorship of Dr. Barlow, who is well endowed with those characteristics that constitute the most devoted scholars: humility, wonder, and sincerity—in addition to his unquestionable intellectual faculties. These transform the work into a pursuit and merge the academic with the spiritual. Never once have I experienced my research as a dry academic endeavor, but solely as a vivid and deep spiritual experience that drastically expands my intellectual horizons. Particularly as Dr. Barlow and I have approached questions concerning time, our project this last year, my capacity to engage with life has increased. I have felt challenged to confront my assumptions, shift my intentions, and never forget to enjoy the interminable richness of life. 



# Student Symposium

Research assistants had the chance to share in a professional setting what they have learned as they study and write with their mentoring scholars.

## PARTICIPANTS

- Alexander Christensen, *RA for Terryl Givens*
- Janai Wright, *RA for Phil Barlow*
- Lettie (Colette) Burton, *RA for Catherine Taylor*
- Dorie Cameron, *RA for Kristian Heal*
- Lavender Earnest, *RA for James Faulconer*
- Garrett Maxwell, *RA for Morgan Davis*
- Josée Cole, *RA for Steve Peck*
- Amisha Chowdary, *RA for Taunaly Ford*
- Isabel Sirrine, *RA for Jeff Cannon*
- Hannah Faulconer, *RA for Jennifer Lane*






# Face to Face with Adam Miller: On Grace







*“Just believing, just having a molecule  
of faith—that simple step, when focused  
on the Lord Jesus Christ, has ever been  
and always will be not only the first  
principle of His Eternal Gospel but also  
the first step out of despair.”*

—JEFFREY R. HOLLAND, **CREATED FOR  
GREATER THINGS**







# Academic Programs & Events



## PROCLAIM PEACE CONFERENCE

9–11 June 2022 | BYU–Hawaii, Oahu

Chad Ford, director of BYU–Hawaii’s Intercultural Peacebuilding program, headed up the planning of the Proclaim Peace conference, with his colleague David Whippy. The Maxwell Institute co-sponsored the conference which celebrated the publication of the Institute’s *Proclaim Peace: The Restoration’s Answer to an Age of Conflict*, by Patrick Q. Mason and J. David Pulsipher. The volume is part of the *Living Faith* series.

Mason said, “This is why Jesus came into the world, and why he called us to be peacemakers: to help heal a fallen, broken, violent world. . . . Proclaiming peace is part of the covenant path for all Christians. We love God because God loved us first. We proclaim peace because Jesus proclaimed peace first.”



### ORGANIZERS:

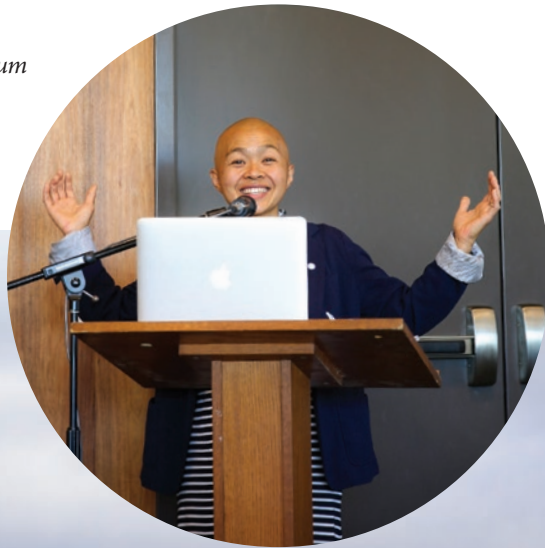
- Spencer Fluhman, *BYU*
- Chad Ford, *BYU–Hawaii*
- David Whippy, *BYU–Hawaii*



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**PRESENTERS:**

- Christina Akanoa, *BYU-Hawaii*
- Emma Billings-Fong, *BYU-Hawaii*
- Adrian Chan, *International Training Consultant*
- Ben Cook, *BYU-Hawaii*
- Kasha Coombs, *Groundwork Leadership Institute*
- Seamus Fitzgerald, *BYU-Hawaii*
- TK Ford, *Groundwork Leadership Institute*
- Loucrisha Hussain, *Citizens Constitutional Forum*
- Melissa Inouye, *University of Auckland*
- Tevita Kaili, *BYU-Hawaii*
- Patrick Mason, *Utah State*
- Adam Miller, *Collin College*
- Chris Pineda, *Groundwork Leadership Institute*
- David Pulsipher, *BYU-Idaho*
- Isaiah Walker, *BYU-Hawaii*



## SYMPOSIA & SEMINARS

### SEEK THIS JESUS WORKSHOPS

March 11–12 & July 17–21, 2022 | Brigham Young University



#### DIRECTORS

- James Faulconer, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*
- Spencer Fluhman, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*
- Rosalynde Frandsen Welch, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*
- Miranda Wilcox, *English, BYU*

#### PARTICIPANTS

- Daniel Becerra, *Ancient Scripture, BYU*
- Tim Farrant, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*
- Jason Kerr, *English, BYU*
- Benjamin Keogh, *Systematic Theology, University of St. Andrews*
- Jennifer Lane, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*
- Kimberly Matheson, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*
- Adam Miller, *Philosophy, Collin College*
- Joseph Spencer, *Ancient Scripture, BYU*
- Jenny Webb, *Philosophy and Religion, Bangor University*
- Andrew Teal, *Pembroke College, Oxford University*







## BOOK OF MORMON ETHICS SEMINAR

April 8–9, 2022 | Brigham Young University

### DIRECTOR

- Daniel Becerra, *Ancient Scripture*, BYU

### PARTICIPANTS

- Fred Axelgard, *Wheatley Institute*, BYU
- Courtney S. Campbell, *Bioethics*, Oregon State University
- Ryan Davis, *Political Science*, BYU
- Michael Ing, *Religious Studies*, Indiana University
- Benjamin Keogh, *Systematic Theology*, University of St. Andrews
- Ariel Laughton, *Independent researcher*
- Kim Matheson, *Maxwell Institute*, BYU
- Rachel Odell, *Political Science*, MIT
- Kelly Sorensen, *Philosophy*, Ursinus College

## DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS WORKSHOPS

April 8–9 & September 16–17, 2022 | Brigham Young University

### DIRECTORS

- Spencer Fluhman, *Maxwell Institute*, BYU
- Kate Holbrook, *Church History*, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*
- Rosalynde Frandsen Welch, *Maxwell Institute*, BYU

### PARTICIPANTS

- Mason Allred, *Communication*, BYU-Hawaii
- Phil Barlow, *Maxwell Institute*, BYU
- Justin Collings, *Law School*, BYU
- Rachel Cope, *Church History and Doctrine*, BYU
- CarrieAnne DeLoach, *Mormon Historical Association*
- Amy Easton-Flake, *Ancient Scripture*, BYU
- Terryl Givens, *Maxwell Institute*, BYU
- Amy Harris, *History*, BYU
- Melissa Inouye, *Chinese Studies*, University of Auckland
- Janiece Johnson, *Church History and Doctrine*, BYU

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## THE CONSULTATION ON LATTER-DAY SAINT WOMEN'S HISTORY

June 6–11, 2022 | Midway, Utah

The group capped its four-year series of gatherings with a week of writing and workshops at the Homestead Resort in Midway, Utah. During the week, participants visited the Church History Library and met with individual research librarians, attended a writing workshop, and shared current writing projects.



### DIRECTORS

- Kate Holbrook, *Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*
- Laurie Maffly-Kipp, *Washington University in St. Louis*

### PARTICIPANTS

- Vinna Chintaram, *University of North Carolina*
- Sasha Coles, *Pennsylvania State University*
- CarrieAnne DeLoach, *Executive Director, Mormon History Association*
- Janan Graham-Russell, *Harvard University*
- Alison Halford, *Coventry University*
- Alexa Himonas, *Georgetown University*
- Amy Hoyt, *Claremont Graduate University*
- Farina King, *Northeastern State University*
- Elizabeth Mott, *Claremont Graduate University*
- Hazel O'Brien, *Waterford Institute of Technology*
- Jenny Pulsipher, *BYU*
- Brittany Romanello, *Arizona State University*
- Charlotte Terry, *University of California, Davis*
- Kristine L. Wright, *Princeton University*



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## LATTER-DAY SAINT THEOLOGY SEMINAR

June 19–July 1, 2022 | Columbia University, New York

This year's summer seminar participants worked on the text of Enos 1:1–18, a rich and personal text about Enos's own wrestle with God as he sought forgiveness for his sins and then, in turn, pled for the future of his own people and his brothers, the Lamanites. Each morning for the first week, participants focused on three or four verses, writing a short formal paper on them. They spent the afternoons discussing the details and implications of the day's verses and sharing their papers. Guest scholars from Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins universities were able to join the discussions. The second week, participants wrote full conference papers grounded in the first week's shared work, presenting polished drafts at a conference on the last day of the seminar. These papers will be published in a new volume of the seminar's proceedings.

### DIRECTORS

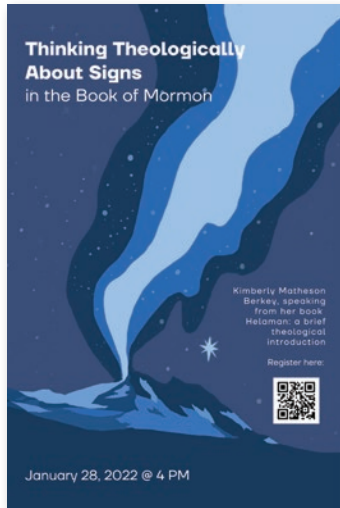
- Adam S. Miller, *Philosophy*, Collin College
- Joseph Spencer, *Ancient Scripture*, BYU

### PARTICIPANTS

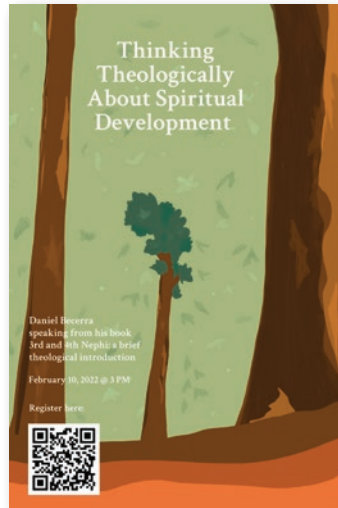
- Liz Brocious, *Philosophy*, Utah Valley University
- Rebekah Call, *Religious Studies*, Claremont Graduate University
- Mike Hansen, *Philosophy*, BYU
- Sharon Harris, *English*, BYU
- Benjamin Keogh, *Theology*, University of St. Andrews
- Kylie Turley, *English*, BYU



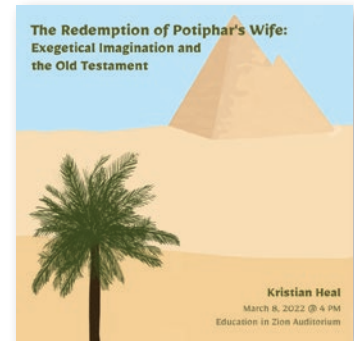
## LECTURES



**THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT SIGNS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON**  
Kimberly Matheson, *BYU*



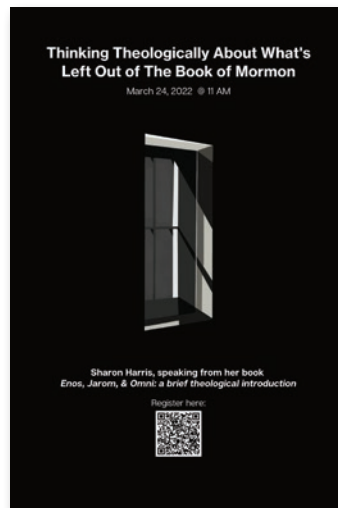
**THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**  
Daniel Becerra, *BYU*



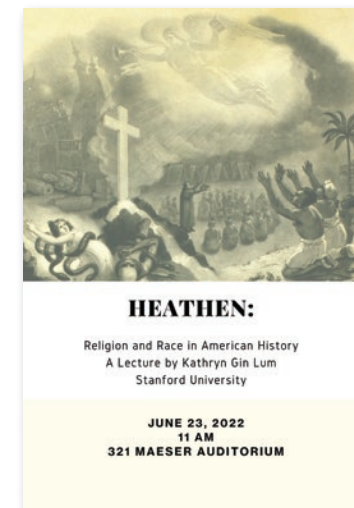
**THE REDEMPTION OF POTIPHAR'S WIFE: EXEGETICAL IMAGINATION AND THE OLD TESTAMENT**  
Kristian Heal, *BYU*



**THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP AT THE END OF THE WORLD**  
Adam S. Miller, *Collin College*

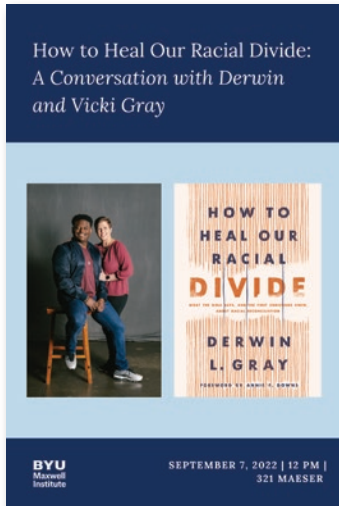


**THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT WHAT'S LEFT OUT OF THE BOOK OF MORMON**  
Sharon Harris, *BYU*

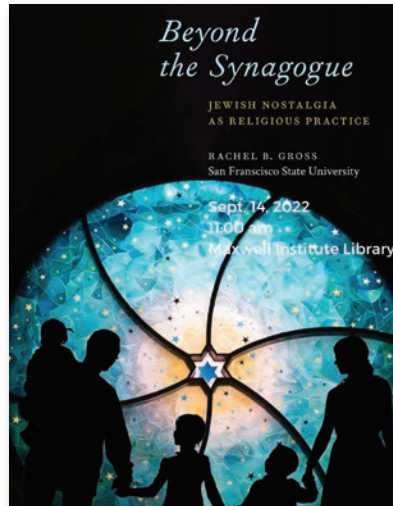


**"HEATHEN: RELIGION AND RACE IN AMERICAN HISTORY"**  
Kathryn Gin Lum, *Stanford University*

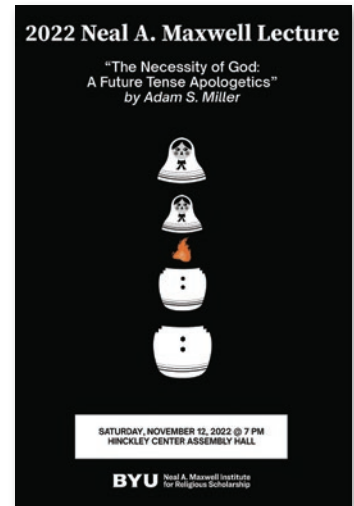




**"HOW TO HEAL OUR RACIAL DIVIDE: A CONVERSATION WITH DERWIN AND VICKI GREY"**  
 Pastor Derwin Gray and Vicki Gray,  
*Transformation Church*



**"BEYOND THE SYNAGOGUE: JEWISH NOSTALGIA AS RELIGIOUS PRACTICE"**  
 Rachel B. Gross, *San Francisco University*



**2022 ANNUAL NEAL A. MAXWELL LECTURE—  
 "THE NECESSITY OF GOD: A FUTURE TENSE APOLOGETICS"**  
 Adam S. Miller, *Collin College*



## CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

### INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON THE MEANINGS OF “LAMANITE” WORKSHOP

August 4–6, 2022 | University of Utah

The workshop brought together academics and community members who study or are affected by the term “Lamanite,” centering on exchanging Indigenous perspectives on Lamanite meanings and identity.

#### PARTICIPANTS

Anglo Baca, *New York University*

Dolores Subia BigFoot, *University of Oklahoma*

Eva Bighorse, *Independent scholar*

Cynthia W. Connell, *Independent scholar*

Monika Crowfoot, *Independent scholar*

Ignacio Garcia, *BYU*

Fernando Gomez, *Museum of Mormon Mexican History*

Stephanie Valeska Griswold, *Claremont Graduate University*

Amanda Hendrix-Kimoto, *Montana State University*

Michael Ing, *Indiana University*

Robert Joseph, *University of Wakaio*

Farina King, *University of Oklahoma*

Thomas Murphy, *Edmonds College*

Sarah Newcomb, *Independent scholar*

Eduardo Obregón Pagán, *Arizona State University*

Darren Parry, *Northwestern Band of Shoshone*

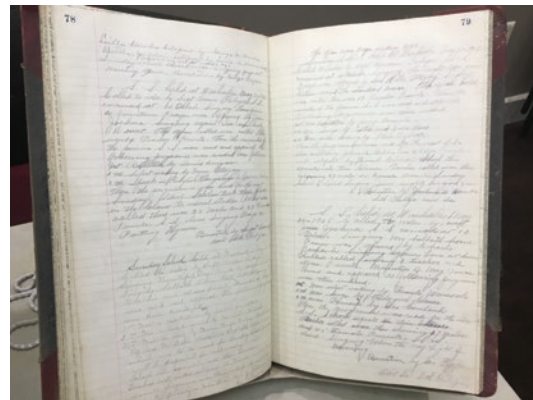
Sarai Silva, *BYU*

Ah-in-nist Sipes, *Independent scholar*

Ata Siulua, *University of Auckland*

Armando Solorzano, *University of Utah*

Arcia Tencun, *University of Auckland*





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## SUMMER SEMINAR, EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

August 12–26, 2022 | Oxford University, England

For two weeks, twelve scholars in religious studies, art history, and theology convened twice daily to participate constructively in Christian-wide discussions that are gaining momentum and urgency, in a time of rampant disaffiliation, critical assessment, and creative theological reexamination. Participants shared their own research and observations about developments in their fields, as they explored how to successfully navigate the synthesis of faithful Latter-day Saint perspectives and participation in wider academic venues and presses. This workshop was made possible by the generous support of the Mormon Scholars Foundation and the Wheatley Institute.

### DIRECTORS

Terryl Givens, *Maxwell Institute, BYU, Director*

Daniel Becerra, *Ancient Scripture, BYU, Co-director*

### PARTICIPANTS

Lincoln Blummel, *Ancient Scripture, BYU*

Jason Combs, *Ancient Scripture, BYU*

Mark Ellison, *Ancient Scripture, BYU*

Tim Farrant, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*

Kristian Heal, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*

Ben Keough, *Theology, University of St. Andrews*

Ariel Laughton, *Independent researcher*

Taylor Petrey, *Religion, Kalamazoo College*

Catherine Taylor, *Maxwell Institute, BYU*



# Media Outlets

## PODCASTS

### MAXWELL INSTITUTE PODCAST

The Maxwell Institute Podcast introduces listeners to the wide world of religious ideas through a Latter-day Saint lens. Guests in 2022 included Janiece Johnson, Jennifer Reeder, Matthew Bowman, Robin Scott Jensen, Elisa Eastwood Pulido, Spencer Fluhman, Chad Ford, Lisa Olsen Tait, Scott Hales, Matthew Wickman, Adam Miller, Kathryn Gin Lum, Jordan Watkins, Kate Holbrook, Derwin and Vicki Gray, Reid Neilson, Scott Marianno, Rosalynde Frandsen Welch.



### ABIDE

The second year of the Abide podcast featured co-hosts Joseph Stuart and Kristian Heal.

Faculty guests were Terryl Givens, Jennifer Lane, Avram Shannon, Catherine Gines Taylor, Joshua Sears, and Joseph Spencer. Students who helped with the podcast included Truman Callens, Julia Evans, Aaron Gorner, Carolyn Lowman, McKay Bowman, Dorie Cameron, Rachel Madsen, Derek Baker, Joanna Olsen, Garrett Maxwell, Abby Ellis.

The Maxwell Institute's podcasts are available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, and other fine podcasting apps. They can also be streamed at [mi.byu.edu/mipodcast](https://mi.byu.edu/mipodcast).



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**4:** J. Spencer Fluhman at BYU's Karl G. Maeser Building. Photo by Jaren Wilkey. BYU Photo.

**5:** BYU campus from Provo Canyon. Photo by Jaren Wilkey. BYU Photo.

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2022 Annual Report

**Editor:** Tessa Hauglid

**Design and Layout:** Hales Creative. Design director, Kelly Nield



## *The Dream*

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